A HISTORY OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

VOLUME ONE 1885-1918

S R MEHROTRA

This book is the second of a trilogy which was planned about thirty years ago. The first, entitled *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (1971), traced the development of modern politics in India from the early nineteenth century up to the birth of the Indian National Congress. The present work deals with the history of the Indian National Congress from its inception in 1885 to 1918, when it suffered a major split. The next volume would attempt to bring the story up to the achievement of independence in 1947.

The Indian National Congress was from the beginning both a movement and a party. The present work is an attempt to write the history of the Congress Party, 1885-1918, concentrating on its organizational aspects. It examines both its politics of principle and its politics of power.

Besides relying on the reports of the annual sessions of the Congress, private papers, the official records of the governments in Britain and India, books and pamphlets, the author has made extensive use of contemporary newspapers and periodicals.

The result of almost two decades of patient and painstaking research, the book brings to light many new facts and provides fresh insights into several aspects relating to the history of this unique and oldest political party in the Third World during the first thirty-three years of its existence.

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The First Indian National Congress, 1885

A History of the Indian National Congress

Volume One
1885-1918

S. R. MEHROTRA

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Preface

This work is the second of a trilogy which was planned about thirty years ago. The first, entitled *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (1971), was a sort of prolegomena. It traced the development of modern politics in India from the early nineteenth century up to the birth of thc Indian National Congress. The present volume deals with the history of the Indian National Congress from its inception in 1885 to 1918, when it suffered a major split. The next volume would attempt to bring the story up to the achievement of independence in 1947.

The Indian National Congress was from the beginning both a movement and a party. My primary aim has been to write the history of the Congress Party, concentrating on its organizational aspects.

This book has been long in the making. It has required years of patient and painstaking research. Besides relying on the reports of the annual sessions of the Congress, private papers, the official records of the governments in Britain and India, books and pamphlets, I have madc extensive use of contemporary newspapers and periodicals. The greatness of the subject, the vastness of the available material and the immensity of the task have often overwhelmed me, but I have persevered.

I should like to thank the staff of the following institutions for their help and courtesy: the British Library; the India Office Library; the Public Record Offices in Belfast, Edinburgh and London; the National Library of Ireland, Dublin; the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; the Cambridge University Library; the Centre of South Asian Studies and the Trinity College Library, Cambridge; the Bodleian and the Christ Church Library, Oxford; the National Library and the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta; the National Archives of India, the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, and the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Memorial Trust Library, New Delhi; the State Record Offices in Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow and Madras; the Aligarh Muslim University Library; the Asiatic Society Library, Bombay; the Fergusson College Library, the Kesari-Mahratta Library, and the Servants of India Society Library, Pune; the H. P. University Library, Shimla; the M. D. University Library, Rohtak; the Theosophical Society Library, Adyar; the British Indian Association and the Indian Association, Calcutta; the Bombay Presidency Association; the Madras Mahajana Sabha; the Servants of India Society Branch, Madras; the Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Prize Fund, Bombay; and the Sachchidanand Sinha Library, Patna. My thanks are due also to the proprietors of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* the *Hindu,* the *Leader,* and the *Tribune* for allowing me to consult the back files of their newspapers.

To Dr Pamcla Taylor I owe a special dcbt of gratitude for reading most of the typescript and making many useful suggestions for improvement. I am grateful to Dr David Taylor and Dr Amrit Varsha Gandhi for nobly responding to my many calls for help.

I must thank the authorities of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, for enabling me to write a substantial part of this book as a Fellow of the Institute in the 1970s. I must also thank the Council of St John's College, Cambridge, for awarding me a Visiting Fellowship for the academical year 1983-4 which helped me immensely in the writing of this book.

I record my grateful thanks to Mr B. R. Nanda, Professor E. C. Moulton, and Professor Pardaman Singh for their helpful suggestions. I should also like to thank my wife, Eva, for assisting me in preparing the work for press.

Shimla
June 1994

S. R. Mehrotra

To the memory of Allan Octavian Hume

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The Formative Phase

In a previous work[1] I tried to trace the development of modern politics in India from 1838, when the first political pressure group was organized in Calcutta, to 1885, when the first Indian National Congress met in Bombay. The following passage from that work may well serve as the starting point for the present one: 'Two different models of a national organization were current in India in the 1870s. One was that of a central organization, presiding over and co-ordinating the activities of its branch and affiliated associations spread all over the country. The other was that of a periodic convention of representative public men from all parts of the country for consultation and co-operation on matters of common interest. ... By the late 1870s sufficient modernization appears to have taken place in India, especially as regards the spread of education, the growth of mass communications, increased urbanization and the rise of the new professional classes, to provide conditions for the creation of a national organization according to the second model. Already in 1877-8 some tentative and unsuccessful efforts in that direction had been made. What was probably needed for these efforts to be renewed and crowned with success was "the occurrence of political crises of systemic magnitude"[2] and, since human institutions are the creation of men of flesh and blood and do not spring to life spontaneously, the emergence of the right leadership. Both these needs were fulfilled in the 1880s.'[3]

Like the seven cities of Greece claiming to be the birthplace of Homer, various persons and organizations have claimed, or been credited with, the parentage of the Indian National Congress. The controversy began soon after the Congress was started. The Theosophical Society was the first to claim the Congress as its child. Colonel H.S. Olcott asserted in December 1886 that 'the Theosophical Society was the parent of the Indian National Congress, for it had first shown the possibility of bringing men from different parts of the country together into friendly relation which had never been known before'.[4] Raghunath Rao in 1888[5] and N.N. Sen in 1889[6] reiterated the claim and virtually accused A.O. Hume of having stolen their thunder. Both maintained that the real origin of the Congress should be traced back to the meeting held at Raghunath Rao's house in Madras in late December 1884, at the close of the anniversary gathering of the Theosophical Society in that city, which chalked out a scheme of a political convention similar to the Theosophical convention.[7]

In 1887 the *Bengalee* first advanced the claim—which it repeated several times in later years—that the 'National Conference' organized by the Indian Association in Calcutta in December 1883 'developed itself into the Congresses of 1885 and 1886'.[8]

The *Tribune* of Lahore, 7 July 1888, while giving credit to the Indian Association of Calcutta for being the first in trying to give a practical shape to the idea of a national conference, remarked: 'But the credit of the conception, we believe, is due to that veteran contributor to the Press, Baboo Shitol Chandra Mukarji, of Muttra. The idea of a National Conference was first suggested so far back as 1876, in an article in the *Indian Tribune*'s issue of 9th November of that year. The *Indian Tribune* was a very ably conducted paper at Allahabad, under the editorship of Baboo Shitol Chandra Mukarji. After pointing out that in politics as well as in many other subjects the educated natives of the different provinces have similar aspirations and are guided by similar principles, the article went on to say: "Under such circumstances, it is to be deeply regretted that no attempt has yet been made to unite the educated natives of different provinces, that they might act together in all public matters. ... The effect of a union of this kind would be wonderful. The country would be benefited in numerous ways. We shall gradually become what we want to be—a strong and powerful nation. A feeling of brotherhood would animate us ... . We do not think our project chimerical. ... Let representative societies be established in all parts of the country and let them act jointly and unitedly. Whenever there is any public question, let them ask the opinion of the societies in the other provinces, and when they want to take any action or to make any demonstration, let them make it all in one body. ... And when such national Associations have been formed, *how happy we shall be to see their representatives assemble, say, once a year at some central place and then in a sort of National Conference greet one another as fellow-countrymen and as brothers.* An assembly of this kind would be a novel and interesting sight. It will diffuse patriotism throughout the country and tie the various nationalities of the continent of India by a chain of admantine love. ... We appeal to the Indian Association, recently organized in Calcutta, to take up this most important question in hand." '[9]

Speaking at Amraoti in December 1897, W.C. Bonnerjee, who had been intimately associated with the Congress movement from its very inception, put forward the theory that 'the National Congress with its present shape and constitution originated ... with Lord Dufferin. Mr. Hume's original scheme of the Congress and its constitution was essentially different from what the Congress ultimately came to be. Mr. Hume's idea was to have mixed assemblies at different centres consisting of both the official and non-official elements, of which the chief local Government authority was to be the President, and the discussions were to embrace even social topics. When he submitted this scheme for Lord Dufferin's approval, His Excellency suggested that a movement should be started on different lines and that the official element should be dropped altogether. His Excellency remarked that the main difficulty which Government officers in charge of the administration of the country experienced, was that they had no means of knowing the grievances of the people; what was wanted was a representative body of persons in touch with the masses, who, so to say, could *voice* their grievances and bring them to the notice of Government.' [10]

All these claims and theories contain some element of truth, but they do not take away from Hume the credit of being 'the father of the Indian National Congress'.

While granting that the Theosophical movement contributed a great deal to the growth of patriotism and public spirit in India, that the annual conventions of the Theosophical Society added to the popularity in India of the idea of holding periodical conferences of representatives from various parts of the country for political purposes, and also that among those who gathered at Bombay for the first Indian National Congress in the last week of December 1885,

there were quite a few, including Hume himself, who were, or had been, associated with the Society, it is necessary to urge a few points against the exaggerated claims of the Theosophists regarding the parentage of the Congress. First, the idea of holding annual conferences of representative men from different parts of the country in order to promote national objectives had been current in India long before the founders of the Theosophical Society landed in Bombay in February 1879. Second, the deliberations at Raghunath Rao's residence in Madras in December 1884 were not followed by any practical action.[11] Third, the organization of the first Indian National Congress in 1885 was the result of developments which had little to do with the Theosophical Society and was on lines very different from those agreed upon at the Madras meeting in December 1884.

The claim put forward on behalf of the Indian Association of Calcutta is equally exaggerated. The Indian Association had a pronouncedly patriotic purpose. Inspired by the ideals of western liberalism and frankly following western models of political organization, particularly Giuseppe Mazzini's Young Italy, its leaders, chief among whom were A.M. Bose and S.N. Banerjea, deliberately tried to stimulate sentiments of national unity, transcending existing differences of class, creed and region, and to give to their association a pan-Indian character. But the Indian Association's grasp exceeded its reach. It was ill equipped to accomplish its grand design of becoming the head and centre of a national movement in the country. Its membership was small—probably not more than 200-300—and its annual income, during the first ten years of its existence, did not exceed Rs. 2,000. The branches of the Association in places outside Bengal, such as Kanpur, Allahabad and Lahore, which made the Association appear as something more than a mere regional organization, were, in fact, mainly composed of or controlled by expatriate Bengalis. But the greatest weakness of the Indian Association lay in the fact that the people of Calcutta looked upon it, not entirely without justification, as neither a national nor a regional but a sectional organization, dominated by a few young and ambitious men with advanced views on the political and social questions of the day. Despite all their ability and enthusiasm, the leaders of the Indian Association did not command much influence in Calcutta and they were deeply involved in local factional struggles. But even if the Indian Association had not suffered from these drawbacks and in fact been the sole representative organization of Bengal, with all the requisite resources at its disposal, it is extremely doubtful whether it could have succeeded in establishing itself as the national organization of India. The country was too vast and regional interests were too strong and various to allow even the English-educated people of the other provinces of India to accept a Calcutta-based association as their leader and spokesman. The very ideal that inspired the leaders of the Indian Association, namely that of a central organization in the metropolis of India, having branches all over the country and directing the national movement, was impracticable in the India of the nineteenth century.[12]

Taking advantage of an international exhibition being held in the capital of British India, the Indian Association organized a 'National Conference' to meet in Calcutta from 28 to 30 December 1883. The conference was attended by 'about one hundred persons' and discussed several questions of national importance.[13] The idea of a national conference had been canvassed in India for quite some time. It did not originate with the Indian Association. Nor was the 'National Conference' of 1883 the first occasion when public men from different parts of the country had met to discuss questions of national importance. In January 1878, for example, a similar gathering had taken place in Calcutta at the initiative of the Poona

Sarvajanik Sabha.[14] The conference of 1883 was called in a perfunctory manner. It met at an awkward time when the public mind in India was preoccupied with the Ilbert Bill[15] controversy. Despite the exaggerated claims of its promoters, it was by no means a very representative or influential gathering. Of those who attended its sittings, 'quite three parts' were Bengalis, mostly members or sympathizers of the Calcutta Indian Association and its branches in northern India. Almost all the non-Bengalis who were persuaded to take part in the conference just happened to be in Calcutta at the time of the exhibition and, though they were persons of consequence, none of them is known to have distinguished himself in national politics in later years. Even all sections of the Indian community in Calcutta were not represented at the conference. The most notable absentees were the leaders of the British Indian Association and the two Muslim organizations in Calcutta. The most important thing about the conference was that it was held. Educated Indians, hailing from more than forty-five different places in the country and belonging to various classes and creeds, had met in an open conference for three days and they had discussed and decided upon many questions of national interest. This was an event of more than ordinary significance, and for this reason the 'National Conference' of 1883 may well be called 'the precursor of the Indian National Congress' and 'the first session of the Indian Parliament'[16]. But it would be entirely wrong to maintain, as the *Bengalee* did, that the idea of the Indian National Congress originated with the Indian Association or that the 'National Conference' of 1883 'developed itself into the Congresses of 1885 and 1886'. The Indian National Congress of 1885 was the result of a separate series of developments. Its organizers and mode of operation were different from those of the 'National Conference'. In fact, almost at the same time as the Indian National Congress was meeting for the first time in Bombay in late December 1885, the Indian Association was holding its second 'National Conference' in Calcutta.[17] The latter was, however, magnanimous enough to send a telegram of greetings to the former.[18] And next year the organizers of the two projects were wise and patriotic enough to merge their forces.

As to the claim that Shitol Chandra Mukarji, editor of the Allahabad *Indian Tribune,* was the first person to have conceived and articulated in 1876 the idea of holding an annual 'National Conference', all that needs to be said is that by the 1870s the idea of organizing a national association or of holding an annual conference of representative men from all parts of the country had become fairly common in India. To Indians, with their innumerable annual fairs and festivals of all sorts, no foreign inspiration was required to suggest the idea of an annual national conference. But the examples of the annual gatherings of several western political, professional and religious bodies,[19] with which they increasingly became familiar, did provide them with useful models.

W.C. Bonnerjee made public in 1897 the role that Lord Dufferin had played in the establishment of the Indian National Congress twelve years earlier in order to counter the charge of sedition being currently levelled against that organization. It is now known for certain that Hume consulted Dufferin before launching the Congress in 1885 and that he also accepted some of the latter's suggestions regarding its composition and functions.[20] Like the able lawyer that he was, Bonnerjee overstated his case a little. But as one of the closest associates of Hume,[21] he knew it better than anybody else—and he made no secret of this—that Hume had conceived the idea of organizing the Congress in 1884 before Dufferin arrived as viceroy in India, and that he was its chief architect.[22]

In *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* it was discussed at length how A.O. Hume, a retired British civilian in India, becamc deeply involved in the Indian national movement during thc viceroyalty of Lord Ripon, how towards the close of 1884 he conceived the idea of 'linking in'—of consolidating the network of contacts he had built up during the preceding few years and transforming it into the nucleus of a 'national party'—and what practical steps he took in order to establish the Indian National Congress in 1885.[23] Hume himself never claimed the sole credit for having founded the Indian National Congress and while, in the later 1880s, the controversy about the parentage of the Congress ragcd, he maintained a dignified silence, but at least one of his close associates was provoked into vindicating his claim and denouncing the pretenders to the title in no uncertain terms. Presiding over the sixth session of the Indian National Congress held in Calcutta, P.M. Mehta remarked on 26 December 1890: '... it is to his [Hume's] genius we owe that flash of light which pointed out the creation of a body like the Congress... I know there are numerous claimants for the credit of the idea, but if I may be pardoned for employing the rudely forcible language of Carlyle, "The firepan, the kindling, the bitumen were his own; but the lumber of rags, old wood, and nameless combustible rubbish (for all is fuel to him) was gathered from hucksters and of every description under heaven. Whereby indeed hucksters enough have been heard to exclaim: 'Out upon it, the fire is *mine*'." ...'[24]

The motives of Hume in establishing the Indian National Congress have been the subject of endless speculation and controversy. Hume's demotion in 1879[25] had undoubtedly something to do with his later behaviour as a political agitator. For one thing, it cut short his official career and set him free to devote his time and energies to the cause of Indian nationalism. A desire on his part to hit back at his erstwhile official colleagues who had conspired to ruin his official career cannot also be ruled out. But it must be remembered that Hume's radicalism, his sympathetic interest in India and her people, his belief in ultimate self-government for the country, his dissatisfaction with British policies in India, and his obsession with the probability of another bloody revolt in India long predated his official disgrace.[26]

It was not so much his demotion in 1879 as the developments of the next few years which determined Hume's active involvement in the Indian national movement. Soon after his demotion he came under the influence of Theosophy. His essentially liberal, meditative and religious temperament, reinforced by his failure to have a son,[27] his chronic ill health, his advancing age and the frustrations of his official life, probably predisposed him to this eclectic and esoteric creed. To this was added his early admiration for and friendship with its remarkable exponents, Helena P. Blavatsky and Henry S. Olcott. Hume's interest in Theosophy noticeably deepened his love of India and Indians. It endeared him to Indians and enabled him to secure their trust and confidence as few other Britons ever did. It also brought him into contact with many leading Indians in all parts of the country.[28]

This contact was widened and deepened during the viceroyalty of Ripon (1880-4), when Hume mobilized Indian support for Ripon's liberal and pro-Indian policies and acted as an intermediary between the viceroy and Indian lcaders. The events of Ripon's viceroyalty—particularly the Anglo-Indian opposition to the so-called Ilbert Bill—served to convince Hume and his friends—both British and Indian—that Indians needed to organize themselves better in order to protect and promote their interests.[29] The result was the Indian National Congress of 1885.

Hume was not the first person either to conceive the idea of an all-India political organization or to attempt to realize it, nor did he do it all on his own, but his were the authority, the energy and the organizing skill which accomplished the seemingly impossible. There is a good deal of truth in the following remarks made by G.K. Gokhale at the Hume memorial meeting in London on 6 August 1912: 'No Indian could have started the Indian National Congress. Apart from the fact that any one putting his hand out to such a gigantic task had need to have Mr. Hume's commanding and magnetic personality, even if an Indian had possessed such a personality and had come forward to start such a movement embracing all India, the officials in India would not have allowed the movement to come into existence. If the founder of the Congress had not been a great Englishman and a distinguished ex-official, such was the official distrust of political agitation in those days that the authorities would have at once found some way or other to suppress the movement.'[30]

Though the first Indian National Congress actually met in western India from 28 to 30 December 1885, it was in fact, conceived more than a year earlier in the summer capital of the Raj by a 'Hermit of Simla', who dwelt at 'Rothney Castle' in Jakhu, with the active encouragement and inspiration of a 'Mahatma' who then occupied the viceregal house at 'Peterhoff'. It had been the constant endeavour of Lord Ripon throughout his viceroyalty (June 1880—December 1884) 'to strengthen the influence of public opinion in this country' in all sorts of ways, and he had hoped that, when he was gone, the true safeguard of the great liberal and nation-building work that he had attempted in India would lie in the extension and consolidation of the power of Indian public opinion.[31] As the *Hindu* recalled many years later: 'Lord Ripon not only gave up his predecessor's policy of aggression abroad and repression at home, but he soon put the finances on a sound basis and took the first step towards those measures of constructive reform which recent experience and the altered condition of the country called for. Towards the people especially he adopted a policy of sympathy, trust and progress instead of the one of distrust and coercion that commended itself to his predecessor. The native press received back its lost freedom, and its opinions were given weight. Public criticism was invited; public opinion was welcomed; and leaders of Indian thought in every part of the Empire were encouraged by the head of the Government who sought their opinions on the chief measures of administration and legislation. Political activity, instead of being discouraged as a cause and manifestation of disloyalty, was welcomed as a help to the alien Government, and political associations that had been formed in every part of the country were recognized as reliable exponents of native opinion and feeling. The great experiment of local self-government was inaugurated with the express object, among others, of fostering public spirit and stimulating political education. Four years of administration of this character and in this spirit produced on the people its natural effect. Political activity, never before heard of in the country as a whole, manifested itself everywhere in an unmistakable manner; new associations were formed and old ones were revived; the art of agitation was introduced with almost all its Western machinery; monster meetings and monster petitions became common; the platform became an institution; the pamphlet and the placard were put to novel uses. The memorable Resolution on local self-government, the agitation that followed the Ilbert Bill, and the ovations which Lord Ripon's tour through the country and his final departure gave rise to, all kindled in the minds of the people the latent ambition for political union and a substantial share in the business of the country's Government. Hopes and aspirations were kindled, and created alarm among old-fashioned Anglo-Indians. It may be said that the termination of Lord

Ripon's viceroyalty marked the beginning of a new spirit in which the intelligent classes construed their position under British rule, examined existing administrative arrangements and built their hopes of the future.'[32] Ripon's great confidant and ally in the beneficent and noble task that he did in India was Hume. Maurice Duverger says: 'Just as men bear all their lives the mark of their childhood, so parties are profoundly influenced by their origins.'[33] Its parentage and the circumstances in which it was born made a lasting impress on the subsequent history of the Indian National Congress.

While Ripon was planning to leave India in the autumn of 1884, Hume took the lead in organizing widespread demonstrations to mark his departure and in maturing plans for consolidating the network of contacts he had built up, especially during the past few years, and transforming it into the nucleus of a 'national party'. This is confirmed by the following extract from a letter which Hume wrote to the secretary of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, S.H. Chiplonkar, on 16 November 1884: 'I am very sorry to learn that you did not get any letter embodying my ideas about "linking in". They were the result of a good deal of thought and tho' I have talked the matter over with a good many men I wrote to you first as the leading Sabha in India. I have not now the time to write the whole thing out again but this is of less consequence because I hope to talk the whole matter over with you next month. I may tell you in strict confidence that Lord Ripon has made a point of my coming down to meet him at Bombay. Tho' he knows Lord Dufferin well and tho' the latter's letters to him since his appointment seem to promise well for the National Cause yet we cannot feel any surety as to the line he is likely to pursue until Lord Ripon has thoroughly discussed the situation with him. This he will do at Calcutta and he will then communicate the results to me at Bombay. ... I propose to make a little private tour—having made the personal acquaintance of all the earnest men in Bombay and having discussed the situation with them—I propose to come on to Poona and do the same to you. Then go on to Madras, Calcutta, Patna (perhaps Dacca), Benares, Allahabad, Agra, Delhi, Amritsar and Lahore—possibly also Lucknow and some other places. I want to make a practical effort towards that "linking in" which has now become a matter of vital importance to us. ... But as you know I am no notoriety-seeker—that I believe that all the best work is done in secret and silence, as is nature's work—and that I want to effect this journey without anyone but those leaders of thought with whom I deal, knowing anything about it. ... This trip will be rather troublesome to me because I daresay you know, since I became a regular *Chela* 3 years or more ago, I eat neither fish, flesh, fowl, eggs, onions, *Masoor ki dal,* etc. And it is difficult on railway journey to get pure food—and one meets with great impertinence simply because one's ways are different from those with whom one has unavoidably to come in contact.'[34]

Early in December 1884 Hume arrived in Bombay, apparently to bid farewell to Ripon, and stayed there for about three months. During his stay in Bombay he discussed with the leaders of the western presidency the programme of political action to be adopted by educated India. It was no coincidence that he chose first to take the leaders of the western presidency into his confidence. The latter had during the last couple of years shown a political maturity which had impressed friendly British observers. While leaving India in August 1883 Evelyn Baring (later Lord Cromer), who had served as finance member of Ripon's executive council, had openly remarked that he had learnt to regard the public opinion of Bombay 'as expressive of perhaps the best type of political thought in India'.[35] In his private correspondence with colleagues at home, Ripon repeatedly expressed the view that the 'intelligent Natives of the

Bombay Presidency are the best men in India'.[36] He was full of praise for Bombay leaders such as V.N. Mandlik, P.M. Mehta, K.T. Telang, B. Tyabji and J.U. Yajnik, and he recognized in the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha 'an influential body guided by intelligent men'.[37] Whether or not Hume was influenced by the views of Baring and Ripon, there are indications that from the end of 1883 onwards he had begun to rely more upon the Indian leaders of Bombay than upon those of Calcutta in order to mobilize support for Ripon's liberal and pro-Indian measures. Probably he had himself come to realize what the *Indian Spectator* had pointed out in September 1883, that Bombay had three advantages over Calcutta: its public life was less bedevilled by factionalism; its leaders had broader views on national matters; and its Anglo-Indians were, generally speaking, better behaved.[38] He must have also been impressed, as so many others were, by the leading role that Bombay had played in persuading the country not to embarrass Ripon over the Ilbert Bill compromise and in organizing the farewell demonstrations in his honour in late 1884. It seems that Hume travelled to Bombay in December 1884 with the definite object of making it the centre of the political movement which he proposed to launch in India.

Hume's 'linking in' project took him round the whole country from early December 1884 to late April 1885. He visited almost every province and wherever he went he discussed with his friends and contacts the following subjects: the holding of an annual conference of representative men from all parts of India; the organization of a central 'national association' to direct political activity throughout the country; the preparation of a charter of Indian demands to be presented to the British Parliament; the establishment of a 'Telegraphic agency' to dispatch news to the British press giving India's point of view and countering the misrepresentations of Anglo-Indians, particularly those of the Calcutta correspondent of *The Times;* and the formation of an 'Indian party' in the British Parliament. Most of these subjects had acquired prominence during the viceroyalty of Ripon and were currently being debated in the Indian press. And wherever he went he helped in stimulating political activity, in bringing together the leading political workers, and in creating 'select committees' for actively promoting his project. It is not improbable that before he moved on from Bombay to Madras in early March 1885, Hume had already persuaded the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha to play host to the first 'Conference of the Indian National Union' to be held in December of that year, as he had already succeeded in establishing a 'central committee' at Bombay for collecting and transmitting information telegraphically to one of the London dailies.[39]

Soon after his return to Simla, early in May 1885, Hume saw the then viceroy, Lord Dufferin, and acquainted him with his project of a conference of representative men from all parts of India to be held in Poona in the coming December. This is what Dufferin wrote to Lord Reay, the governor of Bombay, on 17 May 1885: 'There is here a gentleman of the name of Hume. He is a son of Joe Hume, whom I very well remember in Parliament. He was at one time employed by Government, but was got rid of on account of his impracticability. Since then he has become a resident in the country, and a disciple of Madame Blavatsky. He is clever and gentleman-like, but seems to have got a bee in his bonnet. Ripon told me he knew a good deal of the Natives, and advised me to see him from time to time, which I have done with both pleasure and profit. At his last interview he told me that he and his friends were going to assemble a Political convention of delegates, as far as I understood, on the lines adopted by O'Connell previous to Catholic emancipation, and he said they propose to ask you to act as Chairman. I took it upon myself to say that it would be impossible for any one in your situation

to accept such an offer. The functions of such an assembly must of necessity consist in criticizing the acts or policy of the Government, in formulating demands which probably it would be impossible to grant, and in adopting generally the procedure of all reform associations. The idea of wishing to associate the head of the Executive Government of a Province with such a programme I told him was absurd. I mention the fact, however, in order that you may be upon your guard. It is our duty carefully to watch the signs of the times, and cautiously and conscientiously to liberalize the administration of India, but I am sure it would be a mistake if we identified ourselves personally either with the reforming or the reactionary enthusiasts.'[40]

Hume's version of the interview with Dufferin is contained in a letter which he wrote to Ripon in January 1889: 'In June [*sic*] 1885, before the Congress was started Lord Dufferin was one of the first persons consulted. At that time the idea was to include officials as well as non-officials—and Lord Reay was to have been invited to be the first President—both by reason of his warm sympathy with the movement and his being Governor of the Province in which the first Congress was to be held. Lord Dufferin warmly approved the proposal, considering that it would at last furnish the Government with something like an authoritative statement of the views and wishes of the educated and intelligent classes throughout the country. The whole scheme exactly as it was carried out (save as regards the exclusion of the official element) was laid before him—there has not been the smallest change in the programme. "But", he said, I quote his exact words, "don't ask Lord Reay to preside—don't have officials—if you gentlemen do your duty you will criticize the administration and officials ought not to take part in this. Consider how awkward it will be for Lord Reay, if Grant Duff's administration comes to be severely criticized whilst he is 'in the chair'." I told him that his views would I was sure be law in such cases, and he said "then I am perfectly satisfied and I wish you every success".'[41]

The extracts quoted above provide conclusive evidence on three points: first, that Hume consulted Dufferin before launching the Congress; second, that Dufferin acquiesced in the project; and, third, that it was at Dufferin's suggestion that the idea of associating officials with the Congress was dropped. Dufferin might have had other reasons for sanctioning the project of Hume and his friends besides the one allegedly advanced to Hume, namely that the Congress 'would at last furnish the Government with something like an authoritative statement of the views and wishes of the educated and intelligent classes throughout the country'. For example, he might, as a Liberal and Irishman, have sympathized with the Indian political aspirations which the Congress was intended to promote.[42] He might have thought that the Congress in India would be like the 'Legislative Assembly' which he had himself instituted in Egypt shortly before coming out to India as viceroy.[43] He might have been eager to win the approbation of educated Indians and to assure them that he meant to continue the policy of Ripon, especially at a time when the Russians were knocking at the gates of India.[44] He might have desired to see a counterpoise to the Anglo-Indian party created in the country. He might even have shared the belief of Hume and Ripon that it was necessary to provide safe and constitutional channels for the discharge of the Indian ferment. But all this is speculation.

Did Dufferin also advise Hume, as W.C. Bonnerjee later claimed, not to discuss social questions at the Congress? Unfortunately, it is not possible to answer this question with any certainty, for Bonnerjee's own claim, based obviously on the information supplied to him by Hume, is available to us in two different versions, one of which sounds most improbable, and

there is no other evidence to go by. The first version forms part of Bonnerjee's speech at Amraoti in December 1897, in which he was reported to have said that 'Mr. Hume's original scheme of Congress ... was to have mixed assemblies at different centres consisting of both official and non-official elements, of which the chief local Government authority was to be the President, and the discussions were to embrace social topics. When he submitted this scheme for Lord Dufferin's approval, His Excellency suggested that a movement should be started on different lines and that the official element should be dropped altogether.'[45] The second, and more well-known, version is contained in Bonnerjee's 'Introduction' to a book called *Indian Politics* in 1898 and reads as follows: 'Mr. A.O. Hume, C.B., had, in 1884, conceived the idea that it would be of great advantage to the country if leading Indian politicians could be brought together once a year to discuss social matters and be upon friendly footing with one another. He did not desire that politics should form part of the discussion, for, there were recognised political bodies in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and other parts of India, and he thought that these bodies might suffer in importance if when Indian politicians from different parts of the country came together, they discussed politics. His idea further was that the Governor of the Province where the politicians met should be asked to preside over them and that thereby greater cordiality should be established between the official classes and the non-official Indian politicians. Full of these ideas he saw the noble Marquis [of Dufferin] when he went to Simla early in 1885. ... Lord Dufferin took great interest in the matter and after considering over it for some time he sent for Mr. Hume and told him that, in his opinion, Mr. Hume's project would not be of much use. He said ... it would be very desirable in the interests as well of the rulers as of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved; and he added that an assembly such as he proposed should not be presided over by the local Governor ... .'[46]

Social reform was an extremely live issue in India in 1884-5, thanks mainly to the publication of B.M. Malabari's famous 'Notes on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood' and his efforts to establish an all-India social reform association.[47] Educated Indian opinion was sharply divided over the issue. While a small minority considered social reform to be far more important and urgent than political reform and even favoured government action to put down social evils, the vast majority was inclined to go slow in the matter and was absolutely opposed to the idea of government interference. British officials were, generally speaking, unwilling to be drawn into the controversy. While most of them privately sympathized with Malabari's crusade, they were reluctant to say or do anything which might antagonize the vast majority of their subjects in India or place them in an embarrassing position with their own people in India and at home. When, for example, Malabari pressed Ripon in 1884 to commit himself publicly on the subject, the latter is said to have remarked: 'My friend, you are leading me into a jungle where the lions may devour me.'[48] Before leaving India Ripon had most probably warned his successor against falling into Malabari's trap. It is also significant that the very first letter which Hume wrote to Dufferin, from Bombay in February 1885, dealt with Malabari's campaign against infant marriage and enforced widowhood in India. Hume attached a good deal of importance to social reform, but he considered Malabari's tactics to be wrong, and, being an alien, he felt he could not personally get involved in reforming Indian society.[49] In his letter of February 1885, Hume advised Dufferin 'to seize some occasion for preaching a little sermon' to 'my enthusiastic little friend, Mr. B.M. Malabari,' as he had himself recently done in a note of which he enclosed a copy for Dufferin's perusal.[50] Dufferin wrote back

thanking Hume for his letter and its enclosure and adding: 'I hope some of these days to have an opportunity of further conversation with you on the subject.'[51] It is highly probable that in their many 'long interview[s]'[52] later in May-June 1885 Dufferin and Hume discussed the question of social reform in India in its various aspects. The government of India was just then busy formulating its views on the vexed question.[53] It was under mounting pressure from social reformers in India—a small but a very vocal minority—and their influential friends in Britain to abandon its attitude of neutrality towards certain notorious social abuses. Dufferin might have feared that if the conference of representatives from all parts of India which Hume and his friends were planning to hold in the coming Christmas demanded legislation against, say, infant marriage and enforced widowhood, it would only add to the embarrassment of his government. For, if the government of India turned down the demand, it would put itself in the wrong with enlightened opinion both in India and at home. On the other hand, if it acceded to the demand, it would surely antagonize the millions of orthodox people in India. It is, therefore, not unlikely that Dufferin advised Hume to exclude social questions from his proposed conference. Hume himself was obviously anxious that the conference should steer clear of social questions, which he knew to be highly controversial,[54] and he must have found the authority of Dufferin's counsel extremely useful in checkmating those of his associates who wanted the conference to take up social questions also.

It was probably after his consultations with Dufferin in May 1885 that Hume issued the circular which is reproduced in the *Report of the First Indian National Congress* and which was perhaps originally drafted in March 1885. The circular was apparently treated as a private and confidential document and circulated among a very small number of people whom Hume called 'the inner circle of the National Party'[55] or 'the Indian National Union'. It read:

'A Conference of the Indian National Union will be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st of December 1885.

'The Conference will be composed of Delegates—leading politicians well acquainted with the English language—from all parts of the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

'The direct objects of the Conference will be: (1) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other; (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

'Indirectly this Conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament and, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions. The first Conference will decide whether the next shall be again held at Poona, or whether following the precedent of the British Association, the Conferences shall be held year by year at different important centres.

'This year the Conference being in Poona, Mr. Chiplonkar and others of the Sarvajanik Sabha, have consented to form a Reception Committee, in whose hands will rest the whole of the local arrangements. The Peshwah's Garden near Parbati Hill will be utilised both as a place of meeting (it contains a fine Hall, like the garden, the property of the Sabha) and as a residence for the delegates, each of whom will be there provided with suitable quarters. Much importance is attached to this since when all thus reside *together* for a week, far greater opportunities for friendly intercourse will be afforded than if the delegates were (as at the time of the late Bombay demonstrations) scattered about in dozens of private houses all over the town.

'Delegates are expected to find their own way to and from Poona—but from the time they reach the Poona Railway Station until they again leave it, everything that they can need, carriage, accommodation, food, &c., will be provided for them gratuitously.

'The cost thus involved will be defrayed from the Reception Fund, which the Poona Association most liberally offers to provide in the first instance, but to which all delegates, whose means warrant their incurring this further expense, will be at liberty to contribute any sum they please. Any unutilized balance of such donations will be carried forward as a nucleus for next year's Reception fund.

'It is believed that exclusive of our Poona friends, the Bombay Presidency, including Sindh and the Berars, will furnish about 20 delegates, Madras and Lower Bengal each about the same number, and the N.W. Provinces, Oudh and the Punjaub together about half this number.'[56]

The fall of Gladstone's Liberal ministry in June 1885 excited 'a general feeling of the liveliest gratification among Anglo-Indians',[57] but it alarmed educated Indians. 'The ascendancy of the Conservative party, however temporary it may be,' wrote the *Indian Mirror*, for example, 'means retrogression or stagnation for India, especially just now, when the renewed energies of a regenerating India are in their first activity.'[58] The inclusion of Lord Randolph Churchill, who had recently visited India and left behind a not entirely unfavourable impression, as secretary of state for India in the new Tory government headed by Lord Salisbury did little to allay Indian apprehensions. Developments at home might have given Hume cause for concern, but, as already planned, he sailed from Bombay on 14 July for Venice *en route* to London.[59] Hume had three main objectives in visiting Britain at this time: first, to acquaint Liberal leaders at home with his project of the Indian National Union; second, to organize an 'Indian party' in Britain to act as a pressure group for India both in and out of Parliament; and, third, to negotiate with the editors of British newspapers for the publication of news from India giving the Indian point of view. Soon after his arrival in Britain, however, Parliament was prorogued and an autumn general election seemed likely. This must have encouraged Hume, as it did so many Indian nationalists and their British friends, to hope that the Liberals might be returned to power again and that Ripon might become the next secretary of state for India.

During his stay in Britain from early August to mid-November 1885, Hume consulted with many leading Liberals, such as W.E. Baxter, John Bright,[60] James Bryce, Sir James Caird, Joseph Chamberlain,[61] John Morley,[62] Florence Nightingale,[63] R.T. Reid, Ripon, and John Slagg. 'He has gone everywhere and seen everybody; and has obtained encouragement and promises of assistance from all whom he has seen ...', reported the London correspondent of the Calcutta *Statesman*.[64] He impressed everyone he met with his extraordinary energy, enthusiasm and knowledge of India. In a letter to the *Standard* early in September 1885 about the current Indian agitation against racial discrimination in volunteering in India, Hume declared himself, probably for the first time in public, to be 'the representative and delegate *pro tem.* of the Indian National Union, an Association that includes the great majority of the foremost members of the Native community of all parts of India'.[65] He arranged with several national and provincial newspapers in Britain for the publication of telegrams from the Indian National Telegraphic Union. He kept his friends in India regularly informed of the progress of his mission in Britain.[66]

Educated Indians evinced far greater interest in the British general election of 1885 than they had ever done before. This was due not only to their expectation that it might lead to a

Liberal victory and the appointment of Ripon as secretary of state for India, but also to their appreciation of the implication of the Irish question, which dominated it, for their own country, and to the fact that for the first time one of their compatriots, Lalmohan Ghose, was trying to enter Parliament as a Liberal candidate from Deptford. Political associations in the three presidencies combined to raise money for supporting one or two Liberal candidates, for propaganda work in England through the distribution of leaflets, and the sending of a deputation of three Indians (N.G. Chandavarkar, S.R. Mudaliar and M.M. Ghose) to address public meetings and meet leading British politicians.[67] The attempt of Indians to intervene, *à la* Irish, in a British general election was not liked by many Britons, particularly those who were Tories. The Indian delegates had to conduct their campaign 'amidst disgraceful insults and slanders', but they did it 'with a dignity and magnanimity' which impressed some fair-minded Britons.[68] But the British people in general were too preoccupied with problems nearer home to spare much thought for the dusky delegates from distant India. Hume tried his best to help them, though he was from the start sceptical of the success of their mission.[69] Even before the polling had begun he was on his way back to India.

The results of the British general election of 1885 were a terrible disappointment to Indians. Lalmohan Ghose and all their 'friends', without a single exception, were defeated; all their 'enemies', also without exception, were elected to Parliament. Believing that these results were due largely to C.S. Parnell's decision to ask the Irish in England to vote against Liberal and Radical candidates in the election, Indian newspapers were critical of him, but they were also full of joy, envy and admiration at the victory which he had secured for the Irish Parliamentary Party, and even expressed the hope that he might use his strength in the interests of the many millions of India who were immeasurably more wronged than the Irish.[70] The Indian press tried to put a bold face on the matter. The *Indian Mirror* wrote: '... if all our Anglo-Indian candidates had been to a man returned, our energies would have been relaxed, and we would have gone to sleep after the present elections had closed. But our disappointment is apt to serve as a spur to keep up our activity, and to stimulate our energies to secure a hearing for our cause in a new Parliament.'[71] The *Indian Spectator,* in common with several other papers, laid particular stress on the advice which a British radical friend, R.D. Rusden, publicly gave to the Indian delegates, namely that 'the salvation of India, in spite of the justice of England, must come from India itself' and that on their return home they should 'start in India a great Indian Reform League, ... having a big branch in every big city, and a small branch in every small town so that when they make a demand, the English Government may know that it is made, not only by a few clever men, or a few journalists, or a small minority of the people of India, but by the people of India itself'.[72] The *Ananda Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta was, however, more outspoken: 'The Liberals and Conservatives are alike to us. So long as we cannot help ourselves our miseries will not cease.'[73]

Though the decision to hold a 'Conference of the Indian National Union' in Poona at the next Christmas had apparently been taken in March 1885,[74] it remained a closely guarded secret for a very long time. Until after Hume had returned to India on 2 December 1885,[75] there was virtually no hint of it in the Indian press,[76] which had continued throughout the preceding months spasmodically to urge the need for some sort of a national organization to evolve and pursue a common political programme in the country. S.N. Banerjea and other leaders of the Calcutta Indian Association were obviously ignorant of the decision of Hume and his friends when in late November 1885 they announced their plan to hold 'a National Conference at

Calcutta during the Christmas vacation (December 25th to December 27th, both days inclusive) to discuss questions of national importance'.[77]

The rather sudden and unexpected decision of the Indian Association to hold a 'National Conference' at Calcutta almost at the same time as the 'Conference of the Indian National Union' was scheduled to meet at Poona must have caused some embarrassment to those who had been intimately associated with Hume in planning the latter assemblage, particularly the leaders of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and the Bombay Presidency Association. We have no means of knowing precisely how they reacted to the situation. It would, however, appear that they waited until the P. & O. Steamship *Nizam* brought Hume back to Bombay from London on the morning of 2 December 1885. Then, in consultation with him, they decided to call their forthcoming conference at Poona a 'Congress' so as to avoid confusion with the proposed 'National Conference' at Calcutta, and also to postpone the start of their meeting from 25 to 28 December 1885, a day after the Calcutta Conference was over. Telegrams were immediately dispatched to the various 'Select Committees' informing them of these changes. An attempt even seems to have been made later to persuade S.N. Banerjea to cancel his conference, but he refused to do so. As Banerjea recorded in his autobiography: 'Mr. W.C. Bonnerjea, who presided over the Bombay Congress, invited me to attend it. I told him that it was too late to suspend the Conference, and that as I had a large share in its organization it would not be possible for me to leave Calcutta and attend the Bombay Congress.'[78] Obviously, Banerjea was hurt to find that he had been kept in the dark about the Congress by its organizers until the very last moment. Latter-day suggestions that Banerjea was deliberately kept out of the first Congress because he was a dismissed civil servant or because of his radical nationalism[79] seem to be far-fetched and based on a total misconception of the character of the gathering at Bombay in December 1885. The first Indian National Congress was a rather private gathering of Hume's friends and acquaintances who had been associated with him during the last four to five years in actively promoting certain policies and principles. It was certainly a gathering of representative men from various parts of India, but not every representative man in the country was necessarily invited to attend it. This would also explain why a person like Syed Ahmed Khan was not asked.

The first public announcement of the forthcoming Congress was made by the Madras tri-weekly *Hindu*. 'We understand', wrote the paper on 5 December 1885, 'that there will be a Congress of native gentlemen from different parts of India at Poona at the end of this month. The Congress is held under the auspices of the Poona Sarvajanicka Sabha and the dates of meeting are the 28th, 29th, and 30th instant.'[80] The Bombay weekly *Indu Prakash* was obviously relying on hearsay when it wrote on 7 December 1885: 'Instead of the national conference at Calcutta which we announced last week a conference is to be held at Puna in next Christmas, when representatives of different cities throughout the country will meet and discuss certain questions of national importance. The Presidency Association and the Puna Sarvajanik Sabha have already sent invitations to Calcutta, Madras, Benares, Ahmedabad, Surat and other places. The preliminaries are, we hear, all settled ... .'[81] The Calcutta daily *Indian Mirror* told its readers about the proposed Congress at Poona for the first time on 12 December by reproducing and commenting upon the news item from the *Hindu* of 5 December. It was later pointed out by the *Hindu* and the *Indian Mirror* that the Congress was, in fact, being convened by the Indian National Union,[82] but they did not care to say, nor did anybody else care to enquire, when this Union was organized and who were its leaders. From the very scanty and

often confused notices of the Congress in the Indian press during December 1885, it would appear that no attempt was made by the convenors to publicize its meeting or programme. This might have been deliberate, for the first Congress was, as has already been remarked, intended to be a private gathering of friends.

The last third of December 1885 was a time of unusual political activity in India, with conferences being held in different parts of the country, which prompted S.N. Banerjea to remark, with pardonable exaggeration, that 'all India seemed at the present moment to have met in solemn conclave to think out the great problem of national advancement'.[83] The Mahajana Sabha was the first to hold its second annual conference in Madras from 22 to 24 December 1885. The second National Conference convened by the Indian Association met at Calcutta from 25 to 27 December 1885. Eurasians from several parts of India met in a 'quiet Conference' at Jabalpur on 26 December 1885. Another sectional conference met at Allahabad from 27 to 30 December 1885. This was convened by the Prayag Central Hindu Samaj and discussed subjects concerning the welfare of Hindus in northern India, chief amongst which was the encouragement of Hindi and its recognition as one of the languages of the courts in the North-Western Provinces and Avadh. It was the second conference of its kind, the first having been held at the same place in December 1884.[84]

While the ordinary observer of the Indian scene in December 1885 tended to equate the forthcoming Congress in western India with the other conferences scheduled to be held in different parts of the country at about the same time, particularly the one at Calcutta, it was clear to the discerning that the former was of a different kind. The *Indian Mirror,* for example, wrote on 18 December 1885 that while the proposed conferences at Calcutta, Allahabad and Madras would be of 'a provincial character', the Poona Congress would be 'altogether national in its composition as well as in its objects' and fulfil 'the long-cherished dream of an Indian patriot'.[85] The prophecy was justified by the event.

Fate, however, deprived Poona of the honour of playing host to the first Indian National Congress. The Sarvajanik Sabha had completed all the necessary arrangements when an outbreak of cholera in the town forced the organizers of the Congress on 24 December 1885 to shift its venue to Bombay.[86] Thanks to the exertions of the leaders of the Bombay Presidency Association, who had from the outset been intimately associated with their friends in Poona in organizing the Congress, and the liberality of the managers of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College and Boarding Trust, who placed the buildings above the Gowalia Tank at the Association's disposal and supervised their furbishing and lighting, everything was ready by the morning of 27 December, when the 'representatives' to the Congress began to arrive. 'During the whole day and far into the night of the 27th,' says the *Report of the First Indian National Congress,* 'informal discussions were carried on between the representatives and the order of the proceedings for the next three days was thus settled.'[87] Time was, however, found the same afternoon for an informal gathering at which the representatives were introduced to some of the leading citizens of Bombay, including a few Anglo-Indians like William Wedderburn, Professor William Wordsworth and Justice John Jardine, who came to the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College to welcome the representatives and express sympathy with the work on which they were about to enter. The 'most unique and interesting' spectacle was thus described by an Anglo-Indian eyewitness in the *Bombay Gazette* of 29 December 1885:

'There were men from Madras, the blackness of whose complexion seemed to be made blacker by the spotless white turbans which some of them wore. A few others hailing from that

Presidency were bare-headed and bare-footed, and otherwise lightly clad, their bodies from the waist upwards being only partially protected by muslin shawls. It may fairly be presumed that they are the leading lights of the towns which they represent, and as such it may be supposed that they are well educated. But they have preferred to retain their national dress and manners, and in this respect they presented a marked contrast to the delegates from Bengal. Some of these appeared in entirely European costume, while others could be easily recognized as Baboos by the peculiar cap with a flap behind which they donned. None of them wore the gold rings or diamond pendents which adorned the ears of some of the Madrasees; nor had they their foreheads painted, like their more orthodox and more conservative brethren from the Southern Presidency. Then there were Hindustanis from such places as Delhi, Agra, Lucknow and Benares, some of whom wore muslin skull-caps and dresses chiefly made of the same fine cloth. On the other hand, there were delegates from the North-West—bearded, bulky, and large-limbed men—in their coats or flowing robes of different hues and in turbans like those worn by Sikh soldiers. There were stalwart Sindhees from Kurrachee, wearing their own tall hat surmounted by a broad brim at the top. In this strange group were to be observed the familiar figures of Banyas from Gujerat, of Marathas in their "cart-wheel" turbans, and of Parsees in their not very elegant head-dress, which they themselves have likened to a slanting roof. Some members of this community had, however, appeared in their "phenta", which threatens in course of time to supersede the time-honoured turban. All these men, assembled in the same hall, presented such a variety of costumes and complexions, that a similar scene can scarcely be witnessed anywhere except at a fancy ball ... . They included a large number of lawyers and conductors of newspapers, and they all appeared to have agreed in the opinion that they had some political aspirations which could by no possibility clash with opposing interests, and that for the promotion of their common object there was a necessity for concerted action. It may be easily imagined that there were some enthusiasts in their number, one of whom was profuse in the expression of his unbounded joy at seeing in flesh and blood good men and true working for the public weal, whom he had formerly known only by name.'[88]

The first meeting of the Indian National Congress began at midday on Monday, 28 December 1885, in the hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, Bombay. It was attended by 'very close on one hundred gentlemen', of whom no less than 72 were non-officials and described as 'representatives'.[89] The largest number of representatives—38 in all—belonged to the western presidency and came from six different centres. The southern presidency sent the second largest contingent, but its 21 representatives came from thirteen different places. Bengal had only three representatives, all of whom were from Calcutta, a fact which was attributed by W.C. Bonnerjee to 'a series of misfortunes, deaths, illnesses and the like'.[90] Four principal towns of the North-Western Provinces and Avadh sent 7 representatives,[91] while three towns of Panjab had one representative each. 'Not only were all parts of India thus represented,' claimed the *Report of the First Indian National Congress* without undue exaggeration, 'but also most classes; there were barristers, solicitors, pleaders, merchants, landowners, bankers, medical men, newspaper editors and proprietors, principals and professors. There were Hindus of many castes, high and low, Mahomedans (though owing to certain unfortunate accidents far fewer than were expected) and Christians, both native, Eurasian and European. All the leading native political Associations and principal Anglo-native newspapers were represented; there were members of Legislative Councils, Presidents and members of Municipal Committees and Local Boards, and it is difficult to conceive any gathering of this restricted number more thoroughly representative of the entire nation than was this Congress ... .'[92]

Officials present at the first Congress included such important personalities as M.G. Ranade, Raghunath Rao, Baijnath, Abaji Vishnoo Kathawate, K. Sundararaman, T.N. Iyer, R.G. Bhandarkar, and D.S. White. Though the *Report of the First Indian National Congress* says that they 'did not (with one exception) take any direct part in the discussions, but attended only as *Amici curiae,* to listen and advise',[93] no less than four of them—Ranade, Raghunath Rao, Sundararaman, and White—are actually found participating in the discussions.[94]

Probably because they were not yet sure how the participants would behave—of what they would say and how they would say it—the organizers decided that the Congress should meet *in camera.* Only a brief report of its proceedings was supplied to the press each day. The detailed report was not published until late the next year.

On the proposal of Hume, which was seconded by S. Subramania Iyer of Madras, supported by K.T. Telang of Bombay, and unanimously carried, W.C. Bonnerjee of Bengal was elected president of the Congress.[95] The election of Bonnerjee as president of the Congress was widely appreciated in Bengal and assuaged any soreness people in that province might have felt because of the manner in which the Congress was convened or their inadequate representation at it. It also established a healthy precedent, namely that the president of the Congress should be chosen from a province other than the one in which it was being held. In his opening remarks to the Congress, Bonnerjee was at pains to emphasize the representative and constitutional character of the gathering. He defined its objects to be as follows:

'(a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in [all] parts of the Empire.[96]

'(b) The eradication by direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

'(c) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the [political and][97] social questions of the day.

'(d) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests.'[98]

It is highly significant that Bonnerjee refuted in advance the charge that the Congress was 'a nest of conspirators and disloyalists' and affirmed that 'there were no more thoroughly loyal and consistent well-wishers of the British Government than were himself and the friends around him'. 'Much had been done by Great Britain for the benefit of India,' he said, 'and the whole country was truly grateful to her for it. ... But a great deal still remained to be done.' In particular, they desired that 'the basis of the government should be widened and the people should have their proper and legitimate share in it'. He asserted that 'their desire to be governed according to the ideas of government prevalent in Europe was in no way incompatible with their thorough loyalty to the British Government'. 'In meeting to discuss in an orderly and peaceable manner questions of vital importance affecting their well-being, they were following the only course by which the constitution of England enabled them to represent their views to the ruling authority.' He expressed his belief that the deliberations of the Congress would be as advantageous to the government as to the people at large.[99]

The detailed official *Report of the First Indian National Congress* fails to give us a vivid sense of the atmosphere which prevailed in the hall of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College

during those three days of late December 1885 when 'the first National Assembly ever yet convened in India'[100] was in session there. Thanks, however, to a 'Special Correspondent' of the Calcutta weekly *Reis and Rayyet,* who was 'present on this the most important occasion in the history of British India'[101] and who adopted the pseudonym 'Chiel',[102] we have a 'Pen-and-Ink Sketch' of the historic gathering which enables us even after the lapse of more than a century to recapture something of the spirit of the occasion and of the men who distinguished themselves thereat. According to this eyewitness account, the most remarkable thing about the first Congress was the moderation, the earnestness, the practicality and the loyalty which characterized its proceedings. 'It seemed to me', he wrote, 'that as if every member had inwardly resolved upon having less of words and more of work, every one of them inspired with an inward feeling that it was real work for his country which had called him to that hall, real work and no long or tall talk. There was an attempt in almost every speech to be brief, concise and to the point, an anxious care to assist than to complicate the discussions, and a ring of true patriotic earnestness which thrilled through the sympathetic chords of all listeners every now and again. Above all, there was moderation in the tone and language such as would have ... put the most moderate Anglo-Indian to the blush. ... This loyal tone which pervaded the Congress attained now and then almost a painful pitch whenever the tongue of grievance grew eloquent, whenever the despair of Native aspiration was painted with vivid colors, whenever the easy and original banter of a speaker betrayed a bleeding heart.'[103]

W.C. Bonnerjee, who presided over this assembly of 'some hundred honest, loyal, and earnest people, sitting round a long table, all bent upon real work and no fuss and sound', was 'at once the envy, the pride, the cynosure of all the eyes in the hall'. He discharged the duties of his office 'with the easy grace of one who is accustomed to the work he performs—with the easy grace with which he conducts a law-suit'. 'A fine tall figure, with a handsome face, and a graceful flowing beard, with a splendid unimpeachable address, with suave manners ... and added to this an almost musical tone in his rich voice and correct pronunciation, he contributed almost half to the smoothness of the proceedings. His dress was English, his every attitude, sitting or standing, was English, his gestures were English, from a gentle wave of his hand to a slight toss of the head—he looked, in fact, every inch an Englishman. And yet, for all that, he looked every inch a Hindoo. There was a grace—in his tone, in his look, in his movements—which was about him in all its native eloquence.'[104] The other notable representative from Bengal, N.N. Sen, was no orator, but 'he commanded the respect of the entire assembly by his simplicity, candour, earnestness and an uncompromising attitude that is wholly his own. ... He seemed to feel every word he uttered, every sentiment he breathed out, and every breath that escaped his lips. It seemed from the tenor, and manner of delivery, of his speech, that his patriotism, or the discussion of the subjects before the Conference admitted of no joke, wit or pleasantry.'[105]

The chief among the Bombayites were Mehta, Telang and Naoroji. About Mehta, 'Chiel' wrote: 'There is a boldness in his attitude, in his voice, and in his delivery which will instil warmth and animation into the dullest assembly of people. His reasoning is convincing, his expressions terse and concise, his argument always to the point. A fine tall figure like that of Mr. Bonnerjee, with a Europeanish fair complexion and black luxuriant whiskers, ... he was a good challenge ... to Mr. Bonnerjee, sitting opposite, from Bengal. He stands up suddenly like a note of admiration, sits down suddenly like a full stop, and enjoys the vehement applause which follows this latter action with a nervous pleasure which he vainly tries to conceal by

constantly pushing his specs closer and closer to his bright, bold eyes.' Telang was 'brighter and livelier in his conversation' than Mehta, and when addressing the Congress he showed 'great fluency of speech'. 'Middle-sized in stature, of fair olive complexion, handsome features—no beard, no whiskers, a long but thin moustache', dressed in a pair of white trousers and a white long china coat, with a small brimless cap on his shaven head, he 'eut a very striking figure'. 'The grey-haired patriot [Naoroji] is short and thin, but full of spirit, enthusiasm and good sense. He dresses himself in a somewhat old, if not orthodox, Parsee fashion—a pyjama, a long yellowish ... coat and the slanting Gujcrati hat. He took his stand at the end of the discussion of each Resolution and recapitulated the whole. It is a pleasurc and an honour to hear him. The old man is also full of sparkle, wit and sly humour and sarcasm. With rare fluency of speech and curt expressions, he harmonized all conflicting points raised in the discussions and gave nerve, tissue and fibre to the wordings and tone of the Resolutions. On every occasion that he rose, he opened his vast fund of information and experience for the adjustment of doubts and differences of opinions, and to the delectation of all round the table. ... It was Mr. Dadabhai Nowrojee who thus put the object of the conference in a nutshell: "To demand for the rights of British subjects, as British subjects".'[106]

Murlidhar from Ambala made a sensation both by his appearance and by his speeeh. 'With his Punjabee coat and trousers and glittering Cabulee turban, he presented an imposing figure. ... He was essentially a Punjabee speaker, full of enthusiasm and spirit and no little sareastic humour. ... He kept the Congress in a continued roar of laughter.' When at the conclusion of the Congress, the visiting representatives were expressing their gratitude to their Bombay hosts, Murlidhar 'brought down the hall by laying to their door the charge of theft and robbery. They had stolen and robbed his heart.' J. Ghosal, who represented Allahabad, 'was remarkable for his calmness of manner and temperate tone. He seemed to be a lover of silent work.' 'But by far the most striking figures in this assembly of Delegates', 'Chiel' went on to add, 'were those from Madras. They mustered strong on the occasion and ... belied the impression that Madras was ever at any time "benighted". Benighted indeed, when her representatives brought a flood of light before whieh those of all the other Provinees and Presidencies aetually paled! There were, among them, all sorts of speakers. If one was wanting in one thing, another more than sufficiently supplied it. If one speaker was serious unto dullness, another ... opened a battery of such withering sareasm and banter that the grim truths which they couched stood before us in all their nakedness.'[107]

The solitary Briton in this motley assembly was A.O. Hume. Of him, 'Chiel' had this to say: 'With a face beaming with intelligence and frankness, softness, geniality, and sympathy beaming forth from his lustrous eyes, the first to cheer and first to appreciate a sentiment or a joke, he at once formed the chief feature, attraction and almost hope of all around him.'[108] As Baijnath, himself a delegate to the first Congress, recalled many years later: 'Hume's joy at the success of the movement knew no bounds. No father showed more joy at the birth of a son than did the old man at the successful termination of the first Congress.'[109] The three cheers given for him at the conclusion of the first Congress[110] were an acknowledgement of the chief role he had played in organizing the movement.

Those who attended the first Indian National Congress at Bombay in the last week of Deeember 1885 were very conseious of two things: first, that they were making history; and, second, that the Congress was a symbol and a vindication of their growing unity as a nation. 'Surely never had so important and eomprehensive an assemblage occurred within historieal

times on the soil of India,' claimed W.C. Bonnerjee in his presidential address to the Congress.[111] This 'large and influential meeting that I have the honour of addressing today,' remarked G.S. Iyer, moving the first resolution at the Congress, 'this assemblage in Bombay of my chosen countrymen from Calcutta and Lahore, from Madras and Sind, from places wide apart and difficult of intercommunication, indicates the beginning of a national political life, destined to produce a profound change in the immediate future. From today forward we can with greater propriety than heretofore speak of an Indian nation, of a national opinion and national aspirations.'[112]

The same twin notes—of triumph and vindication—sounded through most contemporary press comments on the event. 'It marks', wrote the *Indu Prakash* about the first Congress, 'the beginning of a new life, and whatever traducers may say, it will greatly help in creating a national feeling and binding together distant people by common sympathies, and common ends. ... The very fact that such a conference has met and fairly promises to be a success belies the supposition that we are not a nation. It must be conceded that we are wanting in many qualities which make a nation. We are divided by a variety of languages, religions, and social customs, separated from each other by long distances, and are wanting in homogeneity of race and feeling. Nevertheless it is undeniable that we are at present politically one nation, or at least have the makings of one.'[113] The *Indian Spectator* remarked: 'Is unity of action possible to us Indians as a race? Those sceptics, who found themselves face to face last week with the splendid gathering of nationalities, merged into one united nationality, will find it scarcely worth while to trouble themselves with the question again.'[114]

'The first National Congress at Bombay', wrote the *Indian Mirror,* 'forms an important chapter in the history of British rule in India. The day on which it opened, namely, the 28th December, 1885, will form a red-letter day in the annals of the national progress of the Native races. It is the nucleus of a future Parliament for our country, and will lead to good of inconceivable magnitude for our countrymen. If we were asked what was the proudest day in our life, we should unhesitatingly say it was the day on which we, for the first time, met all our brothers of Madras, Bombay, the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab under the roof of the Gokul Das Tejpal Sanskrit College for the purpose of the National Congress. From the date of this Congress we may well count the more rapid development of national progress in India in future.' The paper expressed the wish that the lieutenant-governor of Bengal and the editor of the *St. James's Gazette,* both of whom had recently questioned whether the feeling of nationality existed, or could ever grow, in India, had been present at the Congress 'to see for themselves what new life India has lately been imbued with, and what national unity is springing up among the various races inhabiting this vast peninsula'.[115] The *Hindoo Patriot* remarked: '... it has been a great and unprecedented gain for us to have been able to demonstrate practically that united action in India after all is not an utter impossibility, that we have every chance of success in meeting on a common platform, and that at no very distant date the so-called hostile nationalities of India may, their Anglo-Indian friends notwithstanding, unite for common political good.'[116]

'The Indians', said the *Hindu*, 'have not indeed issued a manifesto, nor, like some European nations, have they chosen to commemorate the birth of their national unity by any fantastic demonstration or uproarious jubilee. They have been content to look upon the event calmly and with self-possession. Moderation and coolness are the two great characteristics of Indian reformers, and although the inauguration of the Congress at Bombay would have

justified demonstrative accompaniments, it passed off as quietly as any of the public meetings that nowadays so frequently take place in our country. ... A policy and a programme adopted by the collective wisdom of leading lights in all parts of India and urged under a common understanding are sure to receive consideration than otherwise. Indian opinion will then acquire an influence and prestige which cannot be obtained by isolated and unorganized efforts. The spirit of patriotism will spread abroad and lead to the gradual diffusion and consolidation of public opinion.'[117]

The *Hindustani* of Lucknow remarked: 'When the historian of the future sets himself to write the history of the National Congress, he will not fail to mention prominently the 28th, 29th and 30th December 1885, when the various forces of the country were brought together. We have very often used the word "nation". We know what this word means, and we know also that there are many Anglo-Indians who will not believe that there is anything like a nation in India. But if any of these gentlemen had been present at the National Congress alluded to above at the Goculdas Tejpal School, Bombay, he would have been convinced of the existence of something like a nation in India. The assembling of Sindhis, Punjabis, Bengalis, Madrasis, Guzeratis, Mahrattas, Parsis, Marwaris, Hindus and Mahomedans, under the same roof, and for a common object, is by no means a trifling thing.'[118]

The great significance of the unique event was not missed at least by a few noble-souled and liberal-minded Britons. In a private communication to W. Wedderburn at Bombay, Miss Florence Nightingale wrote in late 1885: 'Mr. Hume who brought me a letter from Mr. Ilbert was so good as to give me a good deal of his time. This "National Liberal" Union [*sic*], if it keeps straight, seems altogether the matter of greatest interest that has happened in India, if it makes progress, for a century. We are watching the birth of a new nationality in the oldest civilization in the world. How critical will be its first meeting at Poona. I bid it God speed with all my heart.'[119] C.P. Ilbert wrote to James Bryce early in 1886: 'I consider the recent Bombay Conference, presided over by a Calcutta native barrister, who is a member of the Middle Temple and has a son at Rugby, and yet is in full touch with his countrymen, and attended by representatives from all parts of India, to be the most important event in Indian history, and it would be the height of folly to ignore or make light of the feeling of national unity which is growing up in different parts of India—of which this meeting was a symptom and symbol. The resolutions carried at the meeting ask for much more than it would be safe to give and than the delegates expect to get. But I think something may be done and should be done towards meeting their wishes.'[120] John Slagg, a prominent Liberal, wrote in the May 1886 issue of the *Nineteenth Century* about the first Indian National Congress: '...this Congress is, to my mind, one of the most extraordinary occurrences that are to be found during the period of British rule in India. Many may dislike it, but it would be the merest folly to underrate its profound importance. It is like the handwriting on the wall of Belshazzar's palace. It shows that the time has passed when the paternal despotism we have hitherto maintained in India could satisfy the new life and the new desires which the English language and English literature have breathed into the population. The voices which tell us of this great fact are altogether friendly. The debt of gratitude is freely admitted, and they only call upon us to worthily complete the work which has been begun. It rests with the people and leaders in this country to determine the character of the response that shall be given to the appeal thus made from India.'[121]

The first Indian National Congress marked the beginning of a new era in Indian politics, but it meant a continuation of, not a break with, the past, as was evident from the subjects

which it discussed. Most of these subjects were old and had been debated for over a quarter of a century. They represented, as it were, the highest common factor in the politics of educated India. They had acquired added prominence during the viceroyalty of Ripon and they had figured in India's appeal to the British voter in the recent election. In the main, they dealt with three interrelated themes: representative government; increased employment of Indians in the higher services; and economy in government expenditure.

The Congress devoted the first day, 28 December 1885, to a discussion of the need for a parliamentary inquiry into Indian affairs and the form which such an inquiry should take. The resolution was moved by G.S. Iyer, editor of the Madras *Hindu,* who pointed out that in the days of the East India Company the renewal of its charter at twenty years' intervals brought about a most valuable inquiry into the condition of the country and the nature of its administration, but that since the Crown had taken over the direct governance of India in 1858, these had ceased, and the wants and woes of the people of India were going unnoticed. Parliament had taken control in theory, but abandoned it in fact—except where English party interests were concerned—and the India Council took up the place of the defunct Company. 'It is wonderful that the great statesmen of England should abolish the Company, vexed at its incompetency, and in the same breath should bless it with fresh life in the shape of an even more incompetent and more despotic ruling body. ... In many respects India has been a loser by the transfer of the Government to the Crown instead of a gainer. Since that time, the condition of the people has undergone a most distressing deterioration.'[122] G.S. Iyer referred to 'the most divergent views' being held regarding 'the most vital questions' relating to India—the nature of the British administration, its financial situation, the systems of land revenue, its defence requirements, and the economic condition of the people. 'How long can such an uncertain state of things continue?' he asked. In demanding 'an inquiry into the affairs of our country, our object is nothing more than to see that correct and full evidence relating to the real wants of the country and to the requirements of its future well-being is placed before the English public. ... all of us have the utmost confidence in the justice and fairness of the English people, and we have only to solicit an inquiry into facts, being content to leave the issue in the hands of their great political leaders, be they of one party or the other, of the Conservative or the Liberal party.'[123] The resolution was seconded by P.M. Mehta of Bombay, who laid emphasis on three points: first, the body entrusted with the inquiry 'should be of a character that would enable it to pursue its investigations in India itself'; second, 'the natives of this country should be represented on it'; and, third, it 'should take evidence in India'.[124] N.N. Sen, editor of the Calcutta *Indian Mirror,* supported the resolution saying: 'The neglect of such an enquiry which had been previously of regular recurrence, though at varying intervals of time, has been most disastrous in its consequences to the Indian people. The transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown has been almost, if not altogether, nominal, since it carried with it, and still retains, the worst features of the old system of administration. ... The remedy has thus proved worse than the disease. Whatever may have been the defects of the old East India Company, this much can be said in their favour, that acting under ... restraints ... they took very good care to see that India was governed, so as not to cause grave discontent in the Native population. ... Twenty-seven years is a long time; and the changes those years have brought are almost marvellous. But no corresponding change has been made in the administration of the country to keep pace with the progress of the people. ... The truth as regards this country hardly ever reaches Parliament. It is certainly not the interest, though it is

undoubtedly the duty, of the Indian Council to make it known to Parliament; for that body, under its present constitution, is the greatest obstruction to all Indian reforms. As a matter of fact, there is no actual or even approximate representation of India in any of the great councils of the State, whether in India or in England. Our Legislative Councils in this country are merely shams. The truth is always burked. It is never allowed to rise to the surface; and good care is always taken by the official classes to see that a true representation of Indian views and feelings never goes to the British public and the British Parliament. The Anglo-Indian or official view of every Indian question is always placed before the British public, whether through the Press or the platform or in Parliament. Thus India is allowed to be governed from England in entire ignorance of the wants and wishes of the Indian people. But ignorance is excusable. What is even worse is that when Native public opinion on any question of importance is known, it is completely ignored and disregarded. It is this that we most bitterly complain of, and that almost breaks our hearts.' Sen also insisted that the body to be entrusted with the proposed inquiry should come out to India and 'take the evidence of the best and most independent portion of the Indian community'.[125] After a good deal of discussion in which more than a dozen delegates debated the relative merits of a parliamentary committee or a royal commission as the most suitable way of carrying out the proposed inquiry,[126] the resolution was unanimously adopted in the following amended form: 'That this Congress earnestly recommends that the promised inquiry into the working of the Indian administration here and in England, should be entrusted to a Royal Commission, the people of India being adequately represented thereon and evidence taken both in India and in England.'[127]

As viceroy, Ripon had encountered opposition from 'the old fogies in the Indian Council'[128] to almost every liberal measure which he tried to introduce in the country, and he had come to the conclusion that the first step that should be taken towards a real reform of the Indian administration was to abolish the council of the secretary of state for India in London.[129] It would almost appear that the first Indian National Congress was carrying out his wishes when it adopted a resolution on the second day of its session, 29 December 1885, which read: 'That this Congress considers the abolition of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, as at present constituted, the preliminary to all other reforms.'[130] The resolution was moved by S.H. Chiplonkar, secretary of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, who complained that 'the India Council is composed almost exclusively of retired Anglo-Indian officials who as a class are naturally prone, often from force of habit and sometimes from force of conviction, to hand down to their successors the British Indian Empire in pretty nearly the same condition in which they found it, and who from the operation of the same causes are incapable of being struck by the abuses of that system which gave them birth, though such abuses might at first sight strike any superficial independent observer'.[131] He went on to demand: 'Abolish the Indian Council, and let the Indian Secretary of State direct the government of this country on the same principles on which the Secretary of State for the Colonies governs Ceylon and the other Colonies... .'[132] The resolution was seconded by P. Ananda Charlu, an advocate from Madras, who remarked that 'under the call of our mother country and in her best interests', 'we should turn undertakers'.[133] He described the India Council as 'little else than an oligarchy of fossilised Indian administrators, presided over by the Secretary of State—a member of the British Cabinet', which was 'virtually the final arbiter of India's destinies'.[134] Its Anglo-Indian members were, he said, old men whose 'Indian experience ... is not abreast of the times, as they have long been removed from and are, for all practical purposes, beyond the reach of the

influences and forces actually in operation *in* India.'[135] He concluded by saying: 'The experiment has failed, according to the universal verdict, and we wish that ... [the India Council] may cease to exist ... . The proposition to be next moved will contain the provision for its substitute. ... The true scope of my duty is to indicate the inefficiency of the existing Council and the necessity of its abolition as a primary condition of all other reforms. For the purposes of the proposal which I am seconding, it is enough to say that no improvement is possible till this Council is abolished, without at all implying that, by itself, such a step will at once right everything. To adopt the Rev. Sidney Smith's happy way of putting a like case, "the medical man does not tell you, you will be all right, *when* the bile is got rid of, but he tells you that you will *not* be right, *till after* the bile is got rid of".'[136] J. Ghosal, editor of the Allahabad *Indian Union,* supported the resolution saying that the 'ideas and notions' of the Anglo-Indian members of the India Council were 'almost ancient', their 'policy is always opposed to our advancement ...[and they] are the perennial representatives of Anglo-Indian prejudice, policy and interest'.[137] Of the several other speakers on the motion, not one had a good word to say for the India Council, though at least one of them, R.M. Sayani of Bombay, expressed the fear the secretary of state for India might 'become a perfect autocrat without the Council'.[138] To this S.V. Subbarayadu of Masulipatam replied that 'the Secretary of State [for India] was an autocrat now',[139] while P.M. Mehta remarked that he did not believe in 'secret irresponsible conclaves'.[140]

The Congress spent the remainder of the second day and part of the third, 30 December, discussing the following resolution: 'That this Congress considers the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing Local Legislative Councils by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members (and the creation of similar Councils for the North-West Provinces and Oudh, and also for the Punjaub) essential; and holds that all Budgets should be referred to these Councils for consideration, their members being moreover empowered to interpellate the Executive in regard to all branches of the administration; and that a standing committee of the House of Commons should be constituted to receive and consider any formal protests that may be recorded by majorities of such Councils against the exercise by the Executive of the power, which would be vested in it, of overruling the decisions of such majorities.'[141] K.T. Telang, a lawyer and member of the Bombay legislative council, moved the resolution. He desired 'that in order to give the principle of election a fair scope, at least one half of each Council should be elected. In our Local Boards and Municipalities' Act in this Presidency, that is the proportion fixed, and it would not be a very revolutionary demand to ask for that proportion in the highest Council in each Presidency'.[142] Though he did not want the Congress immediately to commit itself on the point of electorates to these legislative councils, he was himself inclined to think that these could easily be found in the municipal and local boards, chambers of commerce, universities, and 'well-established political Associations'.[143] He added that 'at present we only ask for the Budget being brought forward for consideration in the Councils. We do not propose what would probably be a too radical measure just now, namely, that the Councils should have the power to reject the Budgets of the Executive Government.' He maintained that the power of interpellation demanded in the resolution would help the administration by enabling it to offer 'any information that may dispel dissatisfaction'.[144] As regards the last point contained in the resolution, he remarked: 'On unimportant points, of course, the Executive Government on the spot must decide finally—the responsibility for the administration being vested in them. But on important points, where also

of course the Government on the spot must decide for the same reason, it need not be allowed to decide *finally*. If the point is important enough for a majority of the Council, thus overruled by the Executive to record their protest, such protest ought to go up for final decision to the great and Supreme Council of the British Empire—the House of Commons. These protests would deal, almost necessarily one may say, with great and fundamental questions of policy and upon them, even under present arrangements, the ultimate authority now rests with the House of Commons. On that point also, therefore, our proposals cannot be fairly regarded as either impracticable or revolutionary.'[145] The resolution was supported by S Subramania Iyer, a lawyer and member of the Madras legislative council, who pleaded for 'reconstituting these Councils on a popular and representative basis', and pointed out that their functions were, in fact, 'limited to registering the decrees of the Executive Government and stamp them with Legislative sanction', mainly because their members were 'by no means efficient even as exponents of non-official opinion' and possessed 'little influence ... in the Council[s] for good or for evil'.[146] The most impressive speech on the motion was, however, made by Dadabhai Naoroji. 'We ask', he said, 'for representation in the Legislative Councils of India. It is not for us to teach the English people how necessary representation is for good government. We have learnt the lesson from them, and knowing from them how great a blessing it is to those nations who enjoy it, and how utterly un-English it is for the English nation to withhold it from us, we can, with confidence and trust, ask them to give us this. ... Thanks to our rulers themselves, we have now sufficiently advanced to know the value of representation and to understand the necessity that representation must go with taxation, that the taxed must have a voice in the taxation that is imposed on them. We are British subjects, and I say we can demand what we are entitled to expect still at British hands as their greatest and most noble institution and heritage. It is our inheritance also and we should not be kept out of it. Why, if we are to be denied Britain's best institutions, what good is it to India to be under the British sway? It will be simply another Asiatic despotism. What makes us proud to be British subjects, what attaches us to this foreign rule with deeper loyalty than even our own past native rule, is the fact that Britain is the parent of free and representative Government, and, that we, as her subjects and children, are entitled to inherit the great blessing of freedom and representation. We claim the inheritance. If not, we are not the British subjects which the Proclamation [of 1858] proclaims us to be—equal in rights and privileges with the rest of Her Majesty's subjects. We are only British drudges or slaves. Let us persevere. Britain would never be a slave and could not, in her very nature and instinct, *make* a slave. Her greatest glory is freedom and representation, and, as her subjects, we shall have these blessed gifts.'[147] Naoroji insisted that 'it will be to Government itself a great advantage and relief' to allow them what they had asked for, because 'it will have the help of those who know the true wants of the Natives, and in whom the Natives have confidence, and ... the responsibility of legislation will not be upon the head of Government only, but upon that of the representatives of the people also'.[148] He concluded by saying: 'We are British subjects, and subjects of the same gracious sovereign who has pledged her royal word that we are to her as all her other subjects, and we have a right to all British institutions. If we are true to ourselves, and perseveringly ask what we desire, the British people are the very people on earth who will give what is right and just. From what has already been done in the past we have ample reason to indulge in this belief. Let us for the future equally rely on the character and instinct of the British. *They* have taught us our wants and they will supply them.'[149]

After two other delegates (S.V. Subbarayadu of Masulipatam and Dayaram Jethmal of Karachi) had spoken on the same resolution, K.L. Nulkar, chairman of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, took the floor. He described it as 'the first constructive Resolution, so to speak, that the Congress would be adopting' and wanted to know what was proposed to be done after it was passed. He also thought that the resolution might 'go further and ask for the right of election to the Secretary of State's Council'.[150] The last point was taken up by M.G. Ranade, who proposed that the India Council 'should be composed partly of elected and partly of nominated members'.[151] Raghunath Rao from Madras felt that 'a Council would be necessary only if the Secretary of State [for India] was like the Colonial Secretary, but not otherwise'. He also thought that 'the reference to a Parliamentary Committee would expose India to the risk of Government by English political parties'.[152] P.M. Mehta replied 'that no doubt there were evils in both courses, but on a choice of evils, he thought a substitute for the India Council unnecessary. That Council is a continuously existing evil; the other would be only an occasional one. As to a Parliamentary Committee landing us in party politics, he thought the publicity of the discussions of the Committee would be a great advantage'.[153] N.N. Sen averred that a standing committee of the House of Commons would be good, if Indians had representatives of their own in the House. 'As an alternative proposal there might be a small Parliament in India with many Indian members. Indian political bodies should be asked to name such members and also have a voice in the formation of the existing Executive Councils.'[154] Intervening in the debate, Naoroji emphasized the importance of the standing committee of the House of Commons. During the days of the East India Company, he said, Parliament was 'an effective appellate body', but since 1858 the 'Secretary of State for India is the Parliament. Every question in which he is concerned becomes a Cabinet question. His majority is at his back. ... All appeals, therefore, to Parliament against the Secretary of State become a mere farce. ... And the Secretary of State becomes the true Great Mogul of India—a despotic monarch. His will is his law. ... The [India] Council, when it was established, was considered to be protective of Indian interests. It has not proved so. ... Moreover, the majority of the Council consists of Anglo-Indians. These, sitting in judgment on their own handiwork, naturally regard it as perfect. Having left India years ago they fail to realise the rapid changes that are taking place here in our circumstances, lose touch with us and offer resistance to all progress. Times are now changed. The natives, I may say, have come of age. They can represent directly their wishes and views to the Government here, and to the Secretary of State. They do not require the aid of this Council of the India Office for their so-called representation or protection.'[155] Naoroji went on to say: 'I may here remark, that the chief work of this the first National Congress of India is to enunciate clearly and boldly our highest and ultimate wishes. Whether we get them or not immediately, let our rulers know what our highest aspirations are. And if we are true to ourselves the work of each delegate present here will be to make the part of India where he happens to live devote itself earnestly to carrying out the objects resolved upon at this Congress with all due deliberation. If, when, we lay down clearly that we desire to have the actual government of India transferred from England to India under the simple controlling power of the Secretary of State, and of Parliament, through its Standing Committee, we say what we are aiming at. And that under such an arrangement no Council to advise the Secretary of State is necessary. ... I do not deny that at times the India Office Council has done good service. But this was owing to the personality and sympathy of individuals—men like Sir E. Perry. The constitution of that body is objectionable and

anomalous. When the whole power of imposing taxation and legislation is transferred here, the work of the Secretary of State will be largely diminished. It will only be confined to general supervision of important matters. Whatever comes before him for disposal will be set forth by the Government from here fully and fairly in all its bearings. No Council will be needed to aid him in forming his judgment. Thus no substitute is required for the India Office Council.'[156]

When the debate on the legislative councils was resumed on the third day, 30 December, Telang replied to the criticisms that had been made on the previous day. In his view, he said, 'the centre of the practical work of Indian administration should be shifted from London to India. That ... is a most urgently wanted reform. ... This being my view, I am not prepared to accept one of the suggestions thrown out ... that we should work for representation of our country in Parliament. ... we should have a properly and liberally framed constitution, affording due scope for local knowledge and capacity, under a general supervision in matters involving important general principles vested in the great authority which governs the whole empire, namely the Imperial Parliament. This object appears to me to be served by the constitution proposed in this resolution for representative Councils in the country, supplemented by the Standing Committee of the House of Commons.'[157] He considered it to be virtually impossible to make the India Council even 'a partly representative body' and remarked that 'the India Council should go and leave not a wreck behind, while the useful portion of its work which it is supposed to discharge ought to be performed by the proposed Councils in India'.[158] Like Naoroji, Telang maintained that though occasionally individual members of the India Council had 'fought our battles valiantly and well', it embodied a system 'which is vicious in itself, and which in actual working has failed to influence the administration for good'.[159] Like Mehta, Telang was not afraid 'to throw Indian affairs into the party politics of England', though he denied that his proposal would have that effect.[160]

In summing up the debate on the resolution, the president, W.C. Bonnerjee, said 'that it was not necessary for the Congress to frame a complete scheme. He thought their function was to state and record what improvements were in their opinion desirable, and having done that to leave to the authorities the duty of formulating a scheme. The argument in favour of the [India] Council seemed to him weak. It might well be argued that the whole of the Indian system of administration should be preserved intact because such gentlemen as Wordsworth, Hume and Wedderburn held office under that system. The Council of India was from the beginning a sham. ... it was not at all unreasonable to look forward to a time when in the Government of India there should be Ministries and changes of Ministries as in the Colonies. This is not, of course, provided for just now, but it is not inconsistent with what is asked for. As regards the Supreme Council, that ... ought to be representative of the whole country and of every great province in it.'[161]

At this stage of the proceedings, the president introduced N.G. Chandavarkar, one of the delegates to England, who had on the preceding day returned to Bombay. The Congress thereupon passed by acclamation a vote of thanks to Chandavarkar and the other two delegates for the valuable services they had rendered to the country during their stay in England from October to December 1885. While gratefully acknowledging the vote of thanks on behalf of himself and his colleagues, Chandavarkar conveyed to the assembly a message from Lord Ripon to the following effect: 'Tell your countrymen not to despair. If the friends of your country have been defeated at the elections, they have not been defeated on any Indian question, but on the Church and Irish questions.'[162]

The fourth resolution adopted by the Congress related to the civil service question, which had been agitating the mind of educated India for a long time, and which had recently gained the sympathy and support of Lord Ripon.[163] It read as follows: 'That in the opinion of this Congress the competitive examinations now held in England, for first appointments in various Civil departments of the public service, should henceforth, in accordance with the views of the India Office Committee of 1860, "be held simultaneously, one in England and one in India, both being as far as practicable identical in their nature, and those who compete in both countries being classified in one list according to merit", and that the successful candidates in India should be sent to England for further study, and subjected there to such further examinations as may seem needful. Further, that all other first appointments (excluding peonships and the like) should be filled by competitive examinations held in India, under conditions calculated to secure such intellectual, moral, and physical qualifications as may be decided by Government to be necessary. Lastly, that the maximum age of candidates for entrance into the covenanted Civil Service be raised to not less than 23 years.'[164]

Moving the resolution, Dadabhai Naoroji remarked: 'The resolution which I propose to you is of the utmost possible importance to India. It is the most important key to our material and moral advancement. All our other political reforms will benefit us but very little indeed if this reform of all reforms is not made. It is the question of poverty. It is the question of life and death to India. It is the question of questions.'[165] In support of the demand for simultaneous examinations contained in the resolution, he quoted at length the recommendation of the report, dated 20 January 1860, of an India Office committee.[166] Naoroji argued that 'according to strict right and justice the examination for service in India ought to take place in India alone. The people of Australia, Canada and the Cape do not go to England for their service. Why should Indians be compelled to go to England to compete for the services, unless it be England's despotic will? But I am content to propose the resolution according to the views of the [India Office] Committee [of 1860] for simultaneous examinations, both in England and India ... .'[167] Naoroji claimed that the demands made in the resolution were based not merely on grounds 'of justice, solemn promises and even expediency', but also 'upon a far higher and a most important consideration ... The sole cause of this extreme poverty and wretchedness of the mass of the people [in India] is the inordinate employment of foreign agency in the government of the country and the consequent material loss and drain from the country ... the employment of Native agency is not merely a matter of justice and expediency ... but a most absolute necessity for the poor, suffering, and starving millions of India. It is a question of life and death to the country. The present English rule is no doubt the greatest blessing India has ever had, but this one evil of it nullifies completely all the good it has achieved.'[168] With regard to the second part of the resolution relating to the unconvenanted services, Naoroji maintained that 'a fair system of competition, testing all necessary qualifications—mental, moral and physical—will be the most suitable mode of supplying the[se] services with the best and most eligible servants and relieve Government of all the pressures of back-door and private influences, and jobbery'.[169] In respect of the age of candidates for the civil service examination, Naoroji argued that the matter had recently been threshed out and 'it has been established beyond all doubt that the higher age will give you a superior class of men, whether English or Native'.[170]

The resolution was seconded by M. Viraraghava Chariar of Madras, who argued that education had made considerable progress in India and the character of educated Indians for integrity and honesty of purpose was established beyond doubt, that the British members of the

civil service were 'overpaid and overrated' to the detriment of the interests of Indians.[171] D.S. White, leader of the Eurasian community from south India, favoured 'the gradual abolition of the Civil Service' by putting a stop to 'the future importation of boys' from England.[172] Girija Bhusan Mookerjee from Bengal pointed out that the 'subject ... had engaged the attention of the country for some years and with regard to ... [it] the country had pretty emphatically expressed its opinion'.[173] He quoted from a confidential minute of Lord Lytton's in which the latter had said, 'We have had to choose between prohibiting them and cheating them: and we have chosen the least straightforward course. ... I do not hesitate to say that both the Governments of England and of India appear to me, up to the present moment, unable to answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear.'[174] He concluded by saying: 'What justice ... loudly demanded, what expediency plainly required, what economy distinctly sanctioned, should they not have that simply because Lord Kimberley, evidently under some evil influence, said no to the earnest prayer of the united people of India and to the wise recommendation of the Government of India. No, they ought not to despair. They had ample confidence in the justice of the English people. They must agitate and earnestly and perseveringly agitate till they got what they wanted.'[175]

Replying to the debate, Naoroji reiterated: 'Every pie paid to a foreigner is a *complete material loss* to the country. Every pie paid to a Native is a *complete material saving* to the country. ... it is the whole question of the poverty or prosperity of the country.'[176] Referring to the objection raised against the desirability of sending candidates selected in India for further training to England, he said: 'I say without the least hesitation that the candidate himself as well as the service will be vastly benefited by a visit to England. The atmosphere of freedom and high civilization which he will breathe will make him an altered man—in character, in intelligence, in experience, in self-respect and in appreciation of due respect for others. In short, he will largely increase his fitness and command more respect in his responsible service.'[177] He concluded with the 'most anxious and earnest exhortation to this Congress, and to every individual member of it, that they should perseveringly strain every nerve to secure the all important object of this resolution as early as possible. Once this foreign drain, this "bleeding to death" is stopped, India will be capable by reason of its land, labour and its vast resources to become as prosperous as England, with benefit to England also and to mankind, and with eternal glory to the English name and nation.'[178]

P. Rungiah Naidu of Madras moved the fifth resolution regarding military expenditure which read as follows: 'That in the opinion of the Congress the proposed increase in the military expenditure of the empire is unnecessary, and regard being had to the revenue of the empire and the existing circumstances of the country, excessive.'[179] Naidu argued that the British administration in India had been 'extremely extravagant' and that it had often resorted to 'a very disastrous expedient of raising loans to maintain equilibrium between income and expenditure ... a method to which spendthrifts and reckless speculators resort'.[180] He pointed out how between 1857 and 1884 the military expenditure in India had increased by 50 lakhs of rupees, and how the government of India proposed to add '30,000 men to the army at a cost of 2 millions to over-burdened India'.[181] D.E. Wacha, who seconded the resolution, produced an impressive array of facts and figures to prove how the military expenditure in India was extravagant and crushing in practice, how it was the main cause of the financial embarrassment to the rulers, how India was being compelled by Britain to pay, not for her own defence, but for

the defence of the British empire in various parts of the world, how in this regard she was treated in a manner different from that in which either the self-governing or the crown colonies of the empire were treated, and how, in the words of an ex-finance member of the viceroy's council, 'India is the milch cow of England'.[182] The resolution was supported by Dayaram Jethmal, who appealed to the government to adopt a policy of trust and encourage the volunteer movement in the country.[183]

The delegates to the Congress, however, knew that no matter how strong their cry of opposition might be, the government was determined to increase its military expenditure and to find new revenues in order to balance its budget, which had been unbalanced by the Afghan crisis, the trade depression and the Burmese war. To deal with this situation, the Congress adopted a sixth resolution which said: 'That, in the opinion of this Congress, if the increased demands for military expenditure are not to be, as they ought to be, met by retrenchment, they ought to be met, firstly, by the re-imposition of the Customs Duties; and, secondly, by the extension of the Licence-tax to those classes of the community, official and non-official, which are at present exempted from it, care being taken that in the case of all classes a sufficiently high taxable minimum be maintained.'[184] J.U. Yajnik, a Bombay businessman, who introduced the resolution, referred to the air being already 'thick with rumours in regard to fresh taxation, as to the probable imposition of an Income-tax in place of the existing Licence-tax' and remarked that the time was opportune 'for this Congress to formulate its own views as to the best means of raising a maximum of revenue with a minimum of annoyance'.[185] He insisted that instead of doing away with the services of clerks and peons, retrenchment 'must begin at the top, with the salary of the Viceroy, with the salaries of members of the Supreme Government, and of the highly paid Secretaries to the Government of India. Shears should next be applied to the salaries of the Presidency Governors and to those of the Members of their Councils, including the salaries of the Commanders-in-Chief of the different Presidencies. Then there is the Civil Service—the most highly paid service in the world.'[186] Yajnik opined that 'in the re-imposition of the Customs Duties the Government of India possesses a source of revenue the burden of which will be *least* felt by the people'.[187] These customs duties were not protective, but they had been removed in the name of free trade in order to benefit the British manufacturer and trader. Yajnik maintained that the licence tax should be extended to those classes who had hitherto escaped from its burden—'the official and professional classes who are able to make their voices heard ... the richer and more influential classes'; while its incidence on 'the voiceless millions' was high because the taxable minimum was low.[188] The resolution was seconded by S. Swaminath Iyer of Tanjore[189] and supported by S.V. Subbarayadu of Masulipatam[190] using more or less the same arguments as were advanced by Yajnik. Dayaram Jethmal opposed the suggested extension of the licence tax or any other increase in taxation.[191] He was supported by another pleader from Karachi named Oodharam Moolchand.[192] But their amendment was lost.[193] At the suggestion of S.H. Chiplonkar, seconded by K.T. Telang, a rider to the original resolution was accepted which proposed that 'Great Britain should extend an imperial guarantee to the Indian debt'.[194]

P.M. Mehta moved the seventh resolution which said: 'That this Congress deprecates the annexation of Upper Burmah and considers that if the Government unfortunately decide on annexation, the entire country of Burmah should be separated from the Indian Viceroyalty and constituted a Crown Colony, as distinct in all matters from the Government of this country, as Ceylon.'[195] The Congress conceived its role to be merely that of a friendly critic of the British

administration in India. For a long time to come it confined its attention almost exclusively to questions of internal politics and regarded matters of foreign policy as being beyond its purview.[196] Mehta, therefore, made it clear that 'he would not go into the question of the annexation which he thought was unwise, unjust and immoral. But he would only look at the matter from the Indian point of view.' He referred to Lord Dufferin's recent remark that the troubles on India's north-west frontier disabled him from giving as much attention as he would like to the internal affairs of the country, and added, 'What will be the result, when we have similar trouble on our North-East Frontier also?'[197] K.L. Nulkar of Poona seconded the motion and argued that the annexation of Burma would only add to the financial burdens of India. S. Subramania Iyer, Swaminath Iyer and Sundararaman—all from the Madras presidency—suggested that the Congress might as well delete the earlier part of the resolution and content itself with saying that if unfortunately the decision of the authorities was as it threatened to be, India ought not to be affected by its results, but Mehta pointed out that the adoption of this suggestion might exhibit the force of the opposition to the annexation policy as being weaker than it really was. Mehta's view was accepted by S. Subramania Iyer and others and the resolution was passed unanimously.[198]

Before concluding its labours on 30 December 1885, the Congress adopted two more resolutions which made it clear that it was no isolated demonstration, but the beginning of a movement. The first of these, moved by Murlidhar of Ambala and seconded by H.H. Dhruva of Surat, said: 'That the Resolutions proposed by this Congress be communicated to the political associations in each province, and that these associations be requested with the help of similar bodies and other agencies within their respective provinces to adopt such measures as they consider calculated to advance the settlement of the various questions dealt with in these Resolutions.'[199] The last—and the eighth—resolution, which was proposed by A.O. Hume and seconded by S. Subramania Iyer, read: 'That the Indian National Congress re-assemble next year in Calcutta, and sit on Tuesday, the 28th of December 1886, and the succeeding days.'[200]

Despite pressure from some representatives, the Congress did not formally take up questions of social reform. But advantage was taken of the presence of so many leading men from various parts of the country to informally discuss those questions. Moreover, on 30 December 1885, after the Congress had concluded its sittings, a public meeting was held at the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College at which well-known reformers like Raghunath Rao, Ranade and Telang put forward their views on how best to tackle the evils of infant marriage and enforced widowhood.[201]

When the Congress was being conceived and planned in late 1884 and early 1885, the prospects of its achieving soon and without much effort at least two of the main demands of educated India, namely the liberalization of the legislative councils and the increased employment of Indians in the higher services, seemed bright. The liberalization of the legislative councils, especially by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members and by enabling them to consider the budget and interpellate the executive, had long been overdue. It was even favoured by many Britons—both official and non-official—including viceroys, members of their councils, and chambers of commerce. The civil service question, as it was called, had already become a 'national' issue and engaged a good deal of time of both Ripon and his predecessor, Lytton. Ripon had resigned before the expiry of his usual five-year term in order, among other things, to ensure 'that the appointment of the next Viceroy should not fall into the hands of the Tories' and that his successor was 'a man of really

liberal opinions'.[202] Dufferin was reputed to be a liberal and he promised, in the main, to follow in the footsteps of Ripon as viceroy of India.[203] He even acquiesced in Hume's project of a 'Conference of the Indian National Union' scheduled to be held in late December 1885. The more sanguine among the founding fathers of the Congress even expected that the Liberals would be returned to power once again in the next election, which was expected to be held in 1885, with Gladstone as prime minister and, possibly, Ripon as secretary of state for India. In such a situation, it was hoped that a simple show of the solidity and strength of public opinion in India—supported by the sympathy of the viceroy—would suffice to persuade the British government at home making the necessary concessions.

The founders of the Congress had not, however, reckoned with C.S. Parnell, at that time the undisputed leader of the Irish nationalists. On 9 June 1885 Parnell's followers in the House of Commons combined with the British Tories to bring down Gladstone's Liberal government. It was succeeded by a minority Conservative government which lasted seven months. Though conceived under the most propitious circumstances, the Congress was thus actually born under an evil star. Lord Salisbury, the new Tory prime minister, had been secretary of state for India in the 1860s and 1870s and was known for his hostility to the aspirations of educated Indians. He regarded races like the Irish, the Hottentots and the Hindus as being incapable of self-government.[204] The secretary of state for India in his ministry was Lord Randolph Churchill, whom Dufferin privately described as 'that reckless swash-buckler'.[205] Salisbury's government, dependent on the Irish vote, was anxious to retain the goodwill of Parnell, and followed a policy of concession in Ireland and even began private negotiations with him for a solution of the vexed Irish problem. Parnell, unhappy with the past record of the Liberals and hoping that he could gain more at the hands of the Tories, instructed the Irish in Great Britain to vote against all Liberal and Radical candidates in the election to the House of Commons in November–December 1885. This resulted in the defeat of most Liberals and Radicals who were known to be friendly to India and gave the Tories many more seats than they would have otherwise secured. In the new House of Commons the Liberals had 335 seats to the Tories' 249. The Irish Nationalists, securing a bloc of 86 seats, held the balance. Parnell's choice and his apparently impressive victory in 1885 are matters of history. Their consequences for Irish history continue to be debated to this day. It is generally not known that they had far-reaching consequences for the history of India as well. There is sufficient evidence in the Dufferin papers to indicate that throughout 1885 and 1886—and even later—he was sympathetically inclined towards the two main demands of the Congress—the introduction of an elected element into the legislative councils in India, and an improvement in the recruitment procedures for the civil service.[206] If the Liberals had secured a majority over the Tories and the Irish Nationalists combined, it is not improbable that they would have been persuaded without too much difficulty to make a move in the direction of satisfying both these demands. Dufferin had to mark time as long as the alliance between the Tories and the Irish Nationalists lasted. Soon after that alliance was severed and replaced in early 1886 by the *entente* between the Liberals and the Irish Nationalists, the Liberal government became preoccupied with the question of Irish Home Rule and weakened by defections. Kimberley, the new Liberal secretary of state for India, wrote to Dufferin on 19 March 1886 that 'strong and enduring Governments at home do not seem at all probable. ... What I dread is the instability of temper and the hysterical moods which the nation is subject to ... .'[207] Hume and his Indian friends, on the other hand, complained 'that these wretched Irish troubles have not only for the moment

prevented all progress in our work, but must for years render this progress ten times more difficult than it would otherwise have been'.[208] They were absolutely right. Gladstone's attempt to give Home Rule to Ireland in 1886 'awakened the slumbering genius of [British] Imperialism'.[209] It enormously weakened the Liberal Party. When Gladstone decided to appeal to the country, after the defeat of the Home Rule Bill in the early morning of 8 June 1886, he found that the country was more opposed to Home Rule than the House of Commons. Three hundred and ninety-four seats fell to the Unionists (a number which included 78 dissentient Liberals), while Home Rule mustered but 276 supporters, made up of 191 Liberals and 85 Irish Nationalists. The Conservatives and Liberal Unionists were to remain in power with one brief interval (1892-5) for twenty years. No greater calamity than this could have befallen the Indian National Congress, which had hitched its wagon to the Liberal star. The formation of Salisbury's second ministry in early August 1886, with 'a steady-going old stager like Cross'[210] as secretary of state for India, gave aid and comfort to all those—in Britain and in India—who were opposed to the Congress and to its demands for gradual improvement in the system of British administration in India.

An example would suffice to prove the point made in the preceding paragraph. Dufferin was impressed by the rapid growth of political aspirations in India and the need to satisfy them. He felt that it would be both prudent and profitable for the administration to associate qualified Indians with itself and to provide them with regular, constitutional channels for the expression of their wants and feelings. Among the Indians he had met, he said, there were a considerable number who were both able and sensible, and upon whose loyal co-operation the British could undoubtedly rely. He insisted that 'the objects even of the more advanced party are neither very dangerous nor very extravagant'.[211] The Liberal secretary of state for India, Kimberley, to whom Dufferin had communicated his proposal for the reform of the legislative councils in March–April 1886 was not opposed to 'some very cautious step in this direction',[212] but before any step could be taken the government of which he was a member had gone out of office in July 1886. Dufferin had to waste two years in persuading the new Tory secretary of state, Lord Cross, to permit him to submit his recommendations for the reform of the provincial legislative councils. He affirmed that such a reform would terminate much of the current agitation in India. The Congress functioned more like an Eton or Harrow debating society than even the Oxford or Cambridge Union. But though the Indian educated class was as yet small and uninfluential, it was a growing power. Dufferin believed that he had succeeded is gaining the goodwill and confidence of almost all its leaders. Even the leaders of the Congress, which when it was in session behaved rather like a 'hysterical assembly', were as individuals sober and moderate men. Dufferin thought the time was opportune to permit some form of diluted election for the provincial councils.[213] Cross, while he allowed Dufferin to concoct his scheme, made it clear to him that he was opposed to it. He believed that the adoption of the principle of election in India would mean the beginning of the end of the British Raj and he had a mortal dread of even uttering the word 'election'. Anything like a representative assembly in India seemed to him to be absurd, and he warned Dufferin against paying heed to a noisy and educated few.[214] And when, in November 1888, Dufferin submitted his recommendations[215] for the introduction of the elective principle, the increase in the non-official element in the councils, and the grant to the latter of the right of interpellation and partial control of the finances, they did not commend themselves to the Tory secretary of state.[216] It required yet another viceroy—Lord Lansdowne—and three more years of persistent pressure on his part to

compel a rather reluctant ministry at home to go to Parliament with a half-hearted measure[217] which did not even go as far as the government of India desired and could hardly be expected to satisfy the Indian National Congress.

Dufferin differed widely from Ripon in his political training, experience and general outlook. While Ripon was a statesman, Dufferin was a diplomat. Ilbert wrote to Bryce on 7 July 1885: 'You ask me what I think of Lord Dufferin. He interests me much being so curiously unlike his predecessor: both in their qualities and their defects. Lord Ripon was a first rate man of business, with long and varied administrative experience, with great industry and powers of work, capable of rapidly mastering the details and grasping the principles of any complicated scheme that was set before him. He was at his best when writing a minute on administrative proposals and expounding them orally for the purpose of discussion in Council. Lord Dufferin told us that he was immensely struck with the state papers which Lord Ripon left behind him. Then he was a man of deep religious feelings, a kind of earnest Christian socialist, instinctively sympathising with the weaker classes, always on the look out for any form of oppression and caring little for what society might say; his heart always in the right place, but his mind not always equal to carrying out the schemes which the latter organ prompted. In society he was shy and not at ease, and consequently unpopular, and owing to his shyness ... he saw and heard much less of those by whom he was surrounded and through whom he had to act than was advisable for his own interest or for the interests of the country. Lord Dufferin is a polished man of the world. He was the son of a very clever and accomplished lady, who evidently had much influence over his character, made much of when a young man by the leaders of society on both sides of politics, and has been a *enfant gâté* all his life. Almost his whole training has been diplomatic, and in Canada his position was that of a constitutional monarch, whose main function was to make himself socially popular and keep the peace between rival party leaders (I quite understand the quaint Goldwin's remark about flattering speeches). I doubt whether he ever did a hard day's work before he came out here. Hence he succeeds just where Ripon failed and vice versa. He rapidly made himself very popular with Calcutta society, was much in evidence, went regularly to church and races, adroitly smoothed the ruffled plumes of the Chief Justice, made pretty speeches to the leaders of the Defence Association, expressed audible admiration of their daughters, and danced, if necessary, with their wives. In all this he was ably seconded by Lady Dufferin, who strikes me as being an extremely nice woman, not clever, but full of energy, with much sound bent, and, at bottom, simple, straightforward, sympathetic, and anxious to do what is right. The natives were quite disposed to take a favourable view of the new Viceroy, but were less enthusiastic than Anglo-Indians and inclined to reserve a definition of opinion. It is, I think, much easier to butter an Englishman than a native. The latter is usually himself an adept at the trick, knows how it is done, and what it means. ... The Secretaries complain that he can't be induced to read any papers or pass any definite orders [on administrative questions]. He is most polite to them, thanks them for their admirable notes, says he is much indebted to the Honourable Member in charge of the Department for his suggestions, which he has no doubt will exactly meet the requirements of the case, neatly inscribes a big "D" somewhere on the outside sheet of the file—then trips away to his tennis, with a comfortable sense of duty performed (Was it his ancestor Sheridan who used to dispose of his bills by neatly docketing them?) or else he says vaguely, "Very well, let a despatch be drafted", leaving the unfortunate Secretary to scratch his head and wonder what on earth this despatch is to contain. Even the old Commander-in-Chief grumbles under his

moustache as he jogs away with me from Council, "it is all very well for the newspapers to praise him, but if they only knew what a d—d lazy fellow he is". ... If you asked me, I should say a clever and agreeable man, a first rate diplomat, but not a statesman in the highest sense. For that you want more "capacity for taking trouble" than he possesses.'[218]

Though mainly a diplomat and a dilettante, Dufferin was not devoid of sympathy for the Congress and some of its demands. He never entirely liked or trusted Hume, but his relations with the latter were generally cordial until about the middle of 1886, when Dufferin took offence at certain remarks about him contained in a pamphlet written by Hume and entitled *The Rising Tide.*[219] But the misunderstanding was apparently soon cleared. On 27 October 1886 Dufferin described Hume as a 'generous and honest' man.[220] In early November 1886 he even thought of appointing him a member of the proposed Public Service Commission.[221] But from the middle of 1887 onwards relations between Hume and Dufferin again deteriorated.[222] There were several reasons for this—both private and public. Hume had too many enemies among Anglo-Indian officials—both serving and retired—who lost no opportunity of poisoning Dufferin's mind against him. His erratic and independent-minded behaviour could not endear him to Dufferin. Hume was also blamed by Dufferin for much of his growing unpopularity with the Indian public. It is not improbable that if the Liberals had remained in power all through his viceroyalty, Dufferin's behaviour towards Hume, educated Indians and the Congress would have been very different from what it actually was—especially towards the later stages of his reign. With the Tories being in power in Britain from July 1886 onwards, with Anglo-Indian opinion becoming increasingly hostile to the Congress, with Dufferin anxious to placate his own countrymen in India without whose help, he realized, no viceroy could govern the country, with his hostility towards Gladstone's Home Rule policy, and with his anxiety to secure another high appointment after his retirement from India at the hands of Lord Salisbury, Dufferin naturally turned hostile to the Congress. The refusal of the leaders of educated India to give him the kind of farewell they had given four years earlier to Ripon proved to be the proverbial last straw. Goaded by Sir Auckland Colvin,[223] the lieutenant-governor of the North-Western Provinces, who was also annoyed by the Congress trying to hold its fourth session in the immediate vicinity of the Government House at Allahabad, Dufferin lashed out at the Congress, at Hume, and at educated Indians in general.

Speaking at the St Andrew's Day dinner in Calcutta on 30 November 1888, Dufferin delivered a long and discursive address which ranged from the problems of British government in India—in all their ramifications—to the aspirations of educated Indians and the Congress. He described India as 'an Empire equal in size, if Russia be excluded, to the entire continent of Europe, with a population of 250 million souls ... this congeries of nationalities, religions, tribes, and communities with the tremendous latent forces and disruptive potentialities which they contain', whose governance was an enormously difficult task. He traced the history of British government in India and went on to say: 'And now, gentlemen, some intelligent, loyal, patriotic, and well-meaning men are desirous of taking, I will not say a further step in advance, but a very big jump into the unknown—by the application to India of democratic methods of government, and the adoption of a parliamentary system, which England herself has only reached by slow degrees and through the discipline of many centuries of preparation. The ideal authoritatively suggested, as I understand, is the creation of a representative body or bodies in which the official element shall be in a minority, who shall have what is called the power of the purse, and who, through this instrumentality, shall be able to bring the British executive into

subjection to their will. The organization of battalions of native militia and volunteers for the internal and external defence of the country is the next arrangement suggested, and the first practical result to be obtained would be reduction of the British army to one-half its present numbers. ... I am afraid that the people of England will not readily be brought to the acceptance of this programme, or to allow such an assembly, or a number of such assemblies, either to interfere with its armies, or to fetter and circumscribe the liberty of action either of the provincial Governments or of the Supreme Executive. In the first place, the scheme is eminently unconstitutional; for the essence of constitutional government is that responsibility and power should be committed to the same hands. The idea of irresponsible councils, whose members could arrest the march of Indian legislation, or nullify the policy of the British executive in India, without being liable to be called to account for their acts in a way in which an opposition can be called to account in a constitutional country, must be regarded as an impracticable anomaly. ... Who and what are the persons who seek to assume such great powers—to tempt the fate of Phaeton, and to sit in the chariot of the Sun? Well, they are gentlemen of whom I desire to speak with the greatest courtesy and kindness, for they are, most of them, the product of the system of education which we ourselves have carried on during the last thirty years. But thirty years is a very short time in which to educate a self-governing nation from its primordial elements. ... out of a population of 200 millions, there are only a few thousands who may be considered to possess adequate qualifications, so far as education and an acquaintance with Western ideas or even Eastern learning are concerned, for taking an intelligent view of those intricate and complicated economic and political questions affecting the destinies of so many millions of men which are almost daily being presented for the consideration of the Government of India. I would ask, then, how any reasonable man could imagine that the British Government would be content to allow this microscopic minority to control their administration of that majestic and multiform empire for whose safety and welfare they are responsible in the eyes of God and before the face of civilization? ... These persons ought to know that in the present condition of India there can be no real or effective representation of the people, with their enormous numbers, their multifarious interests, and their tessellated nationalities. ... When the Congress was first started, I watched its operations with interest and curiosity, and I hoped that in certain fields of useful activity it might render valuable assistance to the Government. ... I cannot help expressing my regret that ... they should have concerned themselves instead with matters in regard to which their assistance is likely to be less profitable to us. It is a still greater matter of regret to me that the members of the Congress should have become answerable for the distribution—as their officials have boasted—amongst thousands and thousands of ignorant and credulous men of publications animated with a very questionable spirit, and whose manifest aim is to excite the hatred of the people against the public servants of the Crown in this country. Such proceedings as these no Government could regard with indifference, nor can they fail to inspire it with misgivings, at all events with regard to the wisdom of those who have so offended. Nor is the silly threat of one of the chief officers—the principal secretary, I believe—of the Congress, that he and his Congress friends hold in their hands the keys not only of a popular insurrection but of a military revolt, calculated to restore our confidence in their discretion, even when accompanied by the assurance that they do not intend for the present to put these keys into the locks.'[224]

It was tragic and ironic that Dufferin should have thus attacked educated Indians, the Congress and Hume almost at the very time when Hume was busy defending him openly in the

press against growing Indian criticism of his policies,[225] and when Dufferin himself had sent home a dispatch in which he had recommended an early and sympathetic response to the Indian demand for the reform of the legislative councils.[226] But I have anticipated events and must return to the year 1886.

Disheartened at the unexpected turn in English politics in 1886, Hume and other leaders of the Congress decided to concentrate their efforts on mobilizing popular support in India for their demands and on working through the viceroy, Dufferin, who was apparently sympathetic to them. In pursuance of the eighth resolution of the last Congress, numerous meetings of all kinds and sizes were held in various parts of the country expressing approval of the demands made by the Congress at Bombay, particularly those relating to the reform of the legislative councils and the increased employment of Indians in the higher services through competitive examinations to be held in both England and India. The next Congress was scheduled to be held in late December 1886 at Calcutta, and it was planned to be a huge demonstration. As Calcutta was politically a badly divided city, attempts were made to bring about a sort of 'united front' of all the leading local associations on the basis of a common minimum programme of action. The result was the formation of the Bengal National League in early April 1886 whose sole object was to agitate for the reform and liberalization of the legislative councils.[227] The League secured the support of almost all the prominent groups and associations in Calcutta. Its only weakness lay in the fact that it had very few Muslim members. Attempts were also made to organize local associations in several towns of India.

Hume took the leading role in organizing the Bengal National League. In doing so he was very consciously and closely following the example of the Anti-Corn Law League in Britain in the 1840s. Following the same example he indulged in a good deal of pamphleteering during 1886-7. To mark the birth of the Indian National Congress he wrote his first pamphlet in March 1886. It was called *The Old Man's Hope. A Tract for the Times.*[228] In this he drew a vivid and moving picture of the growing misery and poverty in India, which he ascribed mainly to the persistent drawing away of the wealth of the country and the present autocratic and irresponsible government. The remedy which he proposed was the securing of representative institutions through such methods as were adopted by the Anti-Corn Law League in England. In April 1886 appeared his second—and more controversial—pamphlet entitled *The Rising Tide: or, the Progress of Political Activity in India,*[229] in which he defended the methods of agitation followed by him and other Congressmen all over the country against the attacks of Anglo-Indian papers, particularly the *Pioneer* of Allahabad, which he described as the mouthpiece of the British bureaucracy in India, including the viceroy. In the Preface to this pamphlet, Hume made certain remarks and allegations about Dufferin, which greatly annoyed the latter.[230] Hume's third pamphlet appeared in September 1886 and bore the title *The Star in the East; or, the Bengal National League.*[231] In this he drew attention to the serious nature of the discontent that had prevailed in India in the 1870s, particularly during the viceroyalty of Lytton, and how the beneficent influences of Ripon's administration had diverted the secret bitterness of an angry nation into safe channels of constitutional agitation, and thus averted the danger for the time being and restored hope and confidence. But, he added, that the time would come when these channels would be insufficient to carry safely the rising flood of national sentiment, unless the British rulers of India honestly and boldly adopted the remedy of introducing a substantial popular element into the government of the country. He referred to the formation of the Indian National Congress as the first tangible and unmistakable outcome of the

national unification promoted during Ripon's viceroyalty, and to the more recent constitution of the Bengal National League with its main object of realizing the demand for the reform and expansion of the legislative councils contained in the third resolution of the first session of the Congress held at Bombay in December last. Hume appended to the pamphlet a long note giving the history of the growth of liberal institutions in various parts of the British empire.

The second Congress at Calcutta in 1886 was in many ways different from the first held at Bombay in 1885. 'The Bombay Congress was an experiment. It was cautiously planned and carefully piloted. The footsteps of the leaders were still faltering. Only seventy-two had taken part, and these were not elected. The Resolutions, though well considered and well discussed, were few, and though full of a sense of solemn responsibility, compared with later Congresses it was only a Committee of the best men, and that general enthusiasm of the rank and file, that magnitude of the body and those specimens of oratory which Calcutta inaugurated were yet absent. The second Congress was far in advance of the first. During the year a good deal of public discussion was carried on of the resolutions of the last Congress and its delegates had carried its gospel and inspiration to all parts of the country. There was more time to consider and greater leisure to prepare. The Muhammadans who were but two in the last Congress were now numbering many more ... The delegates were more regularly elected ... and the possible resolutions were circulated in the country some time before the Congress. The delegates numbered about 434, and were given huge ovations as their trains left the stations.'[232]

'The leading characteristic of the Congress of 1886,' says the editor of the official report of its proceedings, 'was that it was the whole country's Congress. The Congress of 1885 had been got together with some difficulty by the exertions of a few leading reformers, and included less than one hundred of the more advanced thinkers belonging to the most prominent centres of political activity. The Congress of 1886 may be said to have grown almost spontaneously, out of the unanimous resolve of the educated and semi-educated classes, throughout the Empire, to take a decisive step towards the attainment of that political enfranchisement to which they have come, of late years, to attach so much importance.

'In all the more advanced provinces action commenced early in the autumn, and it very soon became apparent that the second Congress was destined to be, in many essential respects, a decided advance on the first.

'The delegates or representatives who attended the first Congress, though representatives of the highest culture in the land, and fully qualified to speak as to the wants and wishes of the nation, yet appeared as volunteers in the good cause, uncommissioned, as a rule, by any constituencies, local or general, to appear on their behalf. Very early it seems to have occurred, simultaneously, to all those most interested in the renewed movement, that something more than this was requisite, and that the gentlemen who were to take part in the second Congress ought to receive some public authorization from the bodies and communities (or leading members of these latter) whom they were to represent. Accordingly, as the time of the Congress drew near, the leading Associations at all the more important towns and cities proceeded to elect delegates, and great public meetings, embracing all classes of the community, who were in any way interested in the matter, were also held, almost throughout the country, at which representatives were designated. ...

'Another point, that grew to be generally insisted on, was that the representatives ought to be made aware, beforehand, of the principal subjects likely to come under discussion at the Congress, and so be in a position to ascertain, in advance, the views thereon of their constituencies.

'Accordingly, printed suggestions as to subjects for the consideration of the Congress were issued from several of the provinces and circulated to all the others....

'But the greatest advance lay, perhaps, in the total change in the character of the Congress. In the previous year people had to be pressed and entreated to come; to the late Congress everybody *wanted* to come of their own accord. The first Congress was created by the labour of a few who had to nurse carefully the young plant; the second Congress burst into vigorous growth on its own account, with a luxuriance that demanded careful pruning. ...

'For the first Congress there was no enthusiasm until after it was over and its results had been announced ... but, in regard to the second Congress, the greatest enthusiasm prevailed, especially throughout Bengal. ...

'Nor was this all: at many places, large crowds accompanied the delegates to the ships or railway stations on their departure for the Congress, giving them ovation, as if they were great conquerors returning laden with the spoils of victory, rather than humble soldiers, departing to share in one of the little preliminary skirmishes of Freedom's great battle. ...

'When we reflect that (excluding the people of Calcutta, and those within comparatively easy reach of the capital) 300 men left their homes, many of them men who had scarcely ever before crossed the boundaries of the districts in which they were born, to make long journeys (in the case of nearly 30 of them exceeding 2,000 miles in length) into, to them, unknown provinces, inhabited by populations speaking unknown languages; that the average distance travelled to the Congress by *each* of these 300 gentlemen (by no means as a rule over-rich) was no less than 903 miles; that high caste Brahmins, from Madras, boldly ventured on and crossed dark waters so full of nameless dread and solemnity to most of them, we may begin to realize a little of the growing strength of the idea, of which this late National Congress was the embodiment.

'Altogether about 500 gentlemen were elected either at public meetings, or by Societies, Associations and Sabhas ... [but] only about 440 actually attended the meetings of the Congress. ... Not only were all the presidencies, provinces and natural sub-divisions of the country ... represented by natives of these territorial divisions, but most of the smaller sub-divisions in these provinces were equally represented by the people belonging to *them.* The higher landed interests were well represented, as about 130 of the delegates were talukdars, zemindars, or landed proprietors of one kind or another. The legal profession, as in the English House of Commons, mustered very strong, since no less than 166 delegates belonged to it. ... more than one-fourth of the delegates were graduates. ... Of course the Indian Press was well represented, some fifty editors, sub-editors and proprietors of newspapers appearing as delegates. ... There were two dozen of principals, professors and masters of Indian Schools and Colleges... Then there were some twenty merchants, nearly the same number of bankers, sixteen medical men, a small group of mill-owners, manufacturers, tea and indigo planters, a couple of contractors, a single engineer and three ministers and missionaries. About 70 of the delegates were presidents, vice-presidents or elected members of the Municipalities in which they reside, and some 30 held similar positions in their local district or sub-divisional Boards. ... we were able to show seven "Honourables"[members of legislative councils] ... fifteen Honorary and Presidency Magistrates appear in the list.'[233]

The Calcutta reception committee had to make elaborate arrangements for and incur a good deal of expense on the board and lodging of the hundreds of delegates who came to the 1886 Congress from outside Bengal. Even the meeting hall created a problem. The first sitting of the

Congress on 27 December took place in the local town hall. But the transaction of real business in the town hall, where the delegates were pressed on all sides by a crowd of some 2,500 spectators, seemed impossible and the venue had to be shifted next day, 28 December, to the rooms of the British Indian Association, where there was space for few besides the delegates. This resulted in 'the involuntary exclusion' of the public and the press from the scene of Congress deliberations.[234] The British Indian Association rooms having proved too small to contain with any degree of comfort the large body of delegates, the meetings of the 29th and the 30th took place at the town hall, but the sittings had to be arranged early in the morning to avoid too many spectators. The problem of having a suitable meeting hall for the Congress was satisfactorily resolved at Madras in 1887 by the erection of a special temporary pavilion (*pandal*).

On the opening day, 27 December 1886, Dr Rajendra Lal Mitra, a famous scholar and leading member of the British Indian Association, welcomed the delegates to the Congress on behalf of the local reception committee and said: 'It has been the dream of my life that the scattered units of my race may some day coalesce and come together; that instead of living merely as individuals, we may some day so combine as to be able to live as a nation. In this meeting, I behold the commencement of such a coalescence. I hope the union will not be very distant.'[235] Babu J.K. Mukerji, a great landed proprietor and 'a blind old man ... of 79 ... bending under the infirmities of age', proposed Dadabhai Naoroji as president of the Congress.[236] The proposal was seconded by Nawab Reza Ali Khan Bahadur of Lucknow.[237] In his presidential address, Naoroji drew attention to the refusal of the government to grant the prayer of the first Congress for a Royal Commission of inquiry, but noted that it had agreed to giving a council to the North-Western Provinces. He laid stress on the bitter and growing poverty of India and the extreme necessity of reorganizing the public services on a fairer and more equitable basis.[238] On the subsequent three days—28, 29 and 30 December—the Congress more or less repeated the resolutions of 1885 and added a few more to them, particularly those relating to trial by jury, the separation of the executive from the judicial functions of government, the right of volunteering for Indians, and the desirability of establishing standing Congress committees in all important centres. Allegedly encouraged by the viceroy, Dufferin, himself,[239] the Congress amplified its demand for the reform of the legislative councils.[240]

On the morning of 29 December, the viceroy had private interviews with a number of leading delegates to the Congress—not as delegates or representatives, but only as distinguished visitors to the capital whose views on public matters he was glad to learn.[241] Those who had the honour of thus being invited by the viceroy gained a distinct impression that he was friendly to the Congress and to its main demands, though he saw difficulties in the government accepting some of them.[242] Next day, 30 December, the viceroy gave a garden party to which all the delegates who were on the Government House lists of their respective provinces were invited, not in their capacities as representatives, but as gentlemen of more or less distinction and culture whom he was pleased to be able thus to honour.[243]

That these gestures of courtesy by Dufferin towards some leading delegates to the Calcutta Congress in December 1886 were indicative of his general friendliness towards the movement was confirmed by a public statement by Hume to the same effect which went uncontradicted. Replying to the criticism of the Congress in the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 23 November 1886, Hume wrote a letter to the editor of the Calcutta *Statesman* in December 1886, in which he

said: 'Now it is no breach of confidence (for he speaks freely and candidly to all) on my part, if I say that so far from Lord Dufferin's disliking our national congresses, he is of opinion that, if conducted in the same moderate and practical spirit that characterized last year's congress, they must be of infinite use; firstly, in tending to chasten and sober the aspirations of the more enthusiastic amongst ourselves, and secondly, in conveying to the Government, with a certain degree of authority, a knowledge of what the country is at the time chiefly thinking about and mainly desiring. Then, so far from being opposed to representative institutions, he considers that no Government can ever be thoroughly secure and safe unless based upon these. As to how soon, and to what extent, anything of this nature can be introduced into India, he has not as yet, I believe, pronounced any formal opinion; but so far from being opposed to the idea, I know that he thinks it quite right for those of us who believe the country ripe for a tentative measure in this direction, to press and agitate (always be it understood, in good temper, loyally, and constitutionally) for the same, and do all we can to prove that the time has really come for the first step in this great fundamental reform. As to his disapproving our modern national political movement, he on the contrary holds it to be the most glorious proof of the fidelity with which, on the whole, Great Britain has discharged the momentous trust imposed upon her in regard to this vast Empire by the Almighty. No doubt he dislikes (and so do I, and all who have the interests of India at stake) the ungenerous suspicions, carping, evil motive imputing, *spirit,* which from time to time, here and there, obtains possession of the minds of some of us, and leads us to do injustice, not only to our rulers, but still more to our own better natures; but though he may think it necessary at times, in our own interests, to rebuke somewhat sternly such lapses from the better way, he is too wise a man not to know that when active ferments are proceeding, a little unwholesome gas is always liberated, and to all healthy, honest efforts to improve the position, moral, social or *political,* of the people of India, he is and always will be thoroughly friendly.'[244]

While British politicians were too preoccupied with the Irish question to care about India in 1886[245] and the attitude of most Anglo–Indians—whether official or non-official—to the Congress was frankly hostile, it was no small consolation to the leaders of the Congress to learn that the viceroy of India, Dufferin, was not unfriendly to their aspirations. But this small consolation was more than offset by a growing realization on their part that the vast majority of the Muslim leaders in India were indifferent—if not actively hostile—to the Congress. The leading Muslims of Calcutta had refused to join the Bengal National League in early 1886. The *Aligarh Institute Gazette,* controlled by Syed Ahmed Khan and his able associate, Theodore Beck, the principal of the M.A.O. College, had already on 23 November 1886 launched an attack on the Congress.[246] When in December 1886 the local reception committee of the Congress invited the two prominent Muslim associations of Calcutta—the Mahomedan Literary Society, headed by Nawab Abdul Latif Khan, and the Central National Mahomedan Association, led by Syed Amir Ali—to send delegates to the forthcoming Congress, they refused to do so, on the ground, among others, that they did not wish to embarrass the British government in India, which, they believed, was doing its very best for the country.[247]

Muslim opposition to the Congress grew rapidly and spread to all parts of India during 1887-8. The attempts of Congress leaders to counter it by increasing their contact with the community, by electing a prominent Muslim, B.Tyabji, to preside over the Madras Congress in 1887, by persuading more and more Muslim delegates to attend Congress sessions (Bombay, 1885: 2; Calcutta, 1886: 33; Madras, 1887: 79; Allahabad, 1888: 222), and even by giving them

a guarantee that it would take up no question to which they were, by and large, opposed,[248] only added fuel to the fire. By the end of 1888 it was clear that an overwhelming majority of Muslim leaders all over the country had decided to stay away from, if not actively oppose, the Congress.

The decision of the Muslim leaders to stay away from the Congress was expected and almost inevitable, when examined in the perspective of history. There had been a good deal of give-and-take between Hindus and Muslims in India over the centuries and in the innumerable towns and villages of the subcontinent they lived together, on the whole, in peace and even in friendship. But the Hindu–Muslim riots which occasionally broke out in different parts of the country in the latter half of the nineteenth century served as rude reminders of the fact that neither the passage of time nor common subjection to foreign rule had sufficed to bridge the ancient gulf between the two communities. Hindus and Muslims did not interdine or intermarry and, by and large, they had not yet learnt to respect each other's religion. The latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of cultural revivalism in India. The various communities of the country were becoming self-conscious and self-assertive. They were developing a new sense of their cultural distinctiveness. This trend gave a new edge to their differences. Moreover, economic rivalry, especially the growing competition for limited government jobs, widened the existing cultural and religious schism between Hindus and Muslims. In 1869 Bholanath Chunder noted how 'under the auspices of a liberal education, and the growth of enlightened sentiments, races of one parentage, but separated from each other by hereditary prejudices of fifty or more generations, and forming an ill-cemented mass of petty nationalities', were beginning to 'acknowledge one common brotherhood' and merge into 'one great welded nation throughout the empire'.[249] But he was constrained to remark: 'The fusion of the Mahomedan element, to form a common national Indian mass, requires the heat of the melting point of granite—or 2372 degrees of the political Fahrenheit.'[250] In *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* it was noted how British educational and employment policies served to separate Muslims from Hindus.[251] In order to win over Muslims to their rule, the British government adopted an educational policy which cut Muslims off from the mainstream of secular education in India and strengthened their sense of separatism. Generally confined to their more or less exclusive institutions, of which the most prominent was the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College established at Aligarh in 1875, instructed up to the secondary stage through the medium of Urdu, which was not everywhere the local vernacular, often ignorant of the regional language and literature, and compulsorily saturated with Arabic and Persian, even English-educated Muslims in India developed a mental culture which was different from that of their Hindu, Parsi or Christian counterparts. Thus the government's new educational policy for Muslims, while unifying English-educated Muslims all over the country, resulted in isolating them from the English-educated Indians of the other communities. It promoted the growth of Muslim nationalism and struck at the very root of Indian nationalism. The chief and avowed objective of the British government in India in framing its new educational policy for Muslims in the 1870s was to enable them to compete on equal terms with Hindus for higher civil appointments. Without, however, waiting for the time when they were so enabled, some local governments set out immediately and rather ostentatiously to show undue preference for Muslims in making civil appointments. By constantly contrasting Muslims with Hindus, especially over their respective shares in government service and personal qualities, and occasionally discriminating in favour of the former, the local governments and the Anglo–

Indian press fostered much ill will between the two communities. It was not long before Muslims turned against the principle of competition itself and began to demand that their share in the administrative services in each province should be in proportion to their population. Once again, the government of India partially yielded to their demand. In July 1885, under the viceroyalty of Dufferin, it issued a resolution which said: '... there are a large number of appointments the gift of which lies in the hands of the Local Governments, the High Courts, or local officers. The Governor General in Council desires that in those provinces where Muhammadans do not receive their full share of State employment, the Local Governments and High Courts will endeavour to redress this inequality as opportunity offers, and will impress upon their subordinate officers the importance of attending to this in their selection of candidates for appointments of the class ... referred to. The subject of the extent to which Muhammadans are employed in offices under Government might usefully be noticed in the Annual Reports of provincial administration.'[252] By thus making Muslims the objects of its special attention in matters of education and civil employment, or at least encouraging them to think so, the British government in India ensured, whether it willed it or not, that they, as members of a backward minority community, would always look up to it for the satisfaction of their 'grievances and claims', instead of joining hands with the relatively advanced majority community, namely the Hindus, in coercive political agitation.

Though a few intelligent and prominent Muslims from all parts of India, such as B. Tyabji and R.M. Sayani from Bombay, Hamid Ali from Lucknow, Shurfuddin from Patna, and Humayun Jah Bahadur from Madras, joined the Congress in its early years, the bulk of the Muslim community remained indifferent and even hostile to it. The Congress strove hard to enlist the co-operation of Muslims, but the vast majority of the latter, under the leadership of men like Syed Ahmed Khan, Nawab Abdul Latif Khan and Syed Amir Ali, refused to lend their support. They advanced various reasons for their unsympathetic behaviour towards the Congress. Muslims were, they said, as compared with Hindus, economically and educationally backward and needed government patronage if they were to hold their own against their rivals. They were unlikely to gain anything by joining the Congress. On the contrary, competitive examinations and representative institutions, which the Congress demanded, would only increase the predominance of Hindus in the services and the elected bodies—like the local and municipal boards and the legislative councils—and work to the disadvantage of Muslims. Syed Ahmed and his friends avowed that they were opposed to any agitation which tended to embarrass the British government in India or to force its hands. They advised their co-religionists not to do anything which might arouse the suspicion of the authorities regarding their loyalty to the British Raj. The British government was, they argued, sympathetic to Muslim aspirations and fully alive to the need for protecting their interests. Absolute loyalty to and trust in the British government in India should, therefore, be the motto of Muslims. The removal of British authority or even its slightest weakening in India would be injurious to Muslims, for it would place them at the mercy of the Hindu majority. An Anglo–Muslim alliance was their best safeguard against the possibility of Hindu domination. India, argued Syed Ahmed and his friends, was composed not of one nation but many and while an alien government could be relied upon to hold the balance even between conflicting nationalities, representative government, which was the ultimate objective of the Congress, would inevitably result in the subordination of minorities to the majority community. They denounced the Congress as 'Hindu', 'disloyal', and 'seditious'. They denied its claim to speak for Muslims

and tried to counteract its influence both in India and in England.[253] As a few radical Britons sympathized with the Congress because it represented a progressive movement, many conservative Britons sympathized with Muslims for the simple reason that the latter were opposed to the Congress and were a 'backward community'.

The Muslim attitude to the Congress, which was really a mixture of their jealousy of Hindus, their anxiety to preserve and promote their own interests and their desire to please the British authorities, introduced yet another element of acerbity into the Hindu–Muslim controversy. It hurt and annoyed many Hindu supporters of the Congress, who accused Muslims of being 'selfish' and 'unpatriotic' and of 'playing into the hands of the enemy'. The result was the growth of communalism on both sides. It is tempting, though perhaps futile, to think what would have been the course of Indian history if Syed Ahmed and his friends had chosen to co-operate with the Congress in the 1880s. The founders of the Congress and its early leaders were, generally speaking, loyal and moderate men and they were the least communal in their outlook. Had the recognized leaders of the Muslim community co-operated with them, the Congress would have carried weight with the British government both in India and in Britain. It would have worked as a mighty nationalizer and effectively checked the growth of communalism in the country. But it was not to be. The launching of the Indian National Congress, instead of uniting Muslims with Hindus, was the signal for their further estrangement. 'The prime object of the Congress', sadly confessed B. Tyabji in 1888, 'was to unite the different communities and provinces into one and thus promote harmony. As it is, however, ... the Mahomedans [have] been divided from the Hindus in a manner they never were before ... the fact exists and, whether we like it or not, we must base our proceedings upon the fact that an overwhelming majority of Mahomedans is against the [Congress] movement.' Tyabji went on to argue that if 'the Mussulman community as a whole is against the Congress ... it follows that the movement *ipso facto* ceases to be a general or National Congress. If this is so it is deprived of a great deal of its power to do good. ... Under these circumstances, weighing the good against the evil, I have come to the distinct conclusion after the most careful consideration of which I am capable that it is time to cease holding the Congress every year. I should like to make the Allahabad Congress as great a success as possible. I should like to have as large a representation of Mahomedans as possible and I should then like the Congress to be prorogued, say for at least five years. This would give us an opportunity of reconsidering the whole position and if necessary of retiring with dignity and would at the same time give us ample time to carry into execution our programme, which has already become very extensive. If at the end of the 5 years our prospects improve we can renew our Congress. If not, we can drop it with dignity, conscious of having done our utmost for the advancement of India and the fusion of the different races into one.'[254]

Congress leaders were inclined to blame Anglo–Indians—both official and non-official—for the Muslim breakaway. To a large extent they were right. The Congress movement posed a threat to the Anglo–Indian monopoly of place and power in the country. Most Anglo–Indians looked upon Congressmen as place-hunters and upstarts, if not actually knaves and rogues. They were infuriated by the success of the Calcutta Congress of 1886. Remarks like those of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* that the Congress marked 'the beginning of the end' of the Raj and that it was 'the first step of the Indian nation ... towards [its] political regeneration'[255] only served to confirm the worst fears and suspicions of Anglo–Indians about it. They were even annoyed at the alleged sympathy of Dufferin for the Congress movement, though they regarded

it as feigned and diplomatic. They therefore tried to capture Dufferin. This did not prove to be very difficult, for the attacks on him in the Indian press were sending him crazy and in mid-1887 he had another, and far more serious, quarrel with Hume. Anglo–Indians instigated the conservative elements in Indian society against the Congress. An Allahabad barrister named Arthur Strachey wrote pamphlets and articles against the Congress in the name of the Raja of Bhinga.[256] Raja Shiva Prasad and Syed Ahmed were yoked together in the United Patriotic Association.[257] Theodore Beck and Lepel Griffin openly encouraged the so-called martial races to rise against the 'quill-driving' Congressmen.[258] The extreme and unusual solicitude of Anglo-Indians during the viceroyalty of Dufferin for the Muslims was mainly inspired by the desire to use the 'Crescent card' against the Congress. Already in 1887 the four important elements in the Indian situation which were opposed to the Congress—the viceroy, the Anglo–Indians, the Muslims, and the aristocracy—had begun to act and react on each other. The apparent success of the Madras Congress in December 1887[259]—its more methodical and satisfactory organization, the larger turnout of delegates and visitors, the co-operation extended to it by even the local Muslims, Eurasians and Europeans, its being presided over by a prominent Muslim leader of Bombay, and the friendly gesture of Lord Connemara, the governor of Madras, in inviting the Congress delegates to a garden party—acted as a red rag to the anti-Congress bulls. The 'tumultuous outbreak of opposition'[260] which heralded the fourth Indian National Congress at Allahabad in 1888 was no sudden or unexpected development. It had been gathering force for at least a year.

Opposition stimulated Congress leaders to greater activity. Already in 1887, despairing of appealing to the rulers, they had decided to appeal to the Indian people. In order to acquaint the masses in the country with the evils of the existing British administration in India and the efforts of the Congress to get them removed, they had widely circulated two pamphlets—a Tamil *Catechism on the Indian National Congress*[261] and a Hindustani *Conversation between Molvi Fariduddin ... and Rambaksh.*[262] These pamphlets were seized upon by Anglo-Indians as conclusive evidence of the seditious intent of Congress leaders and provided A. Colvin[263] and Dufferin with an excuse to launch their tirade against the Congress. But even Dufferin's denunciation failed to destroy the Congress. Colvin wrote to Dufferin on 3 December 1888: '... how glad I am to see that you have rebuked that evil genius of Indian aspirations, Hume. Your remarks will carry confusion into the ranks of the intoxicated train which follows the modern Dionysus in his new conquest of India, and they will strengthen and encourage the quiet livers, the even current of whose way was beginning to be agitated by the strideney of the cymbals of the Bacchic procession, and the sinister snarling of its young leopards.'[264] Colvin's prophecy did not come true. The number of delegates attending the Allahabad Congress in 1888 doubled that of Madras in 1887. There were 607 at Madras; 1248 went to Allahabad. Instead of repudiating Hume, as Anglo–Indians had desired and hoped, they re-affirmed their faith and confidence in Hume. Pandit Ajudhianath, a Kashmiri lawyer of large means and member of the N.W.P. legislative council, headed the local reception committee. The Congress was presided over by a leading British businessman and citizen of Calcutta, George Yule, who regretted the abdication of its trust and responsibility towards the people of India by the British Parliament, pleaded for the reform of the legislative councils in the country and assured Congressmen that Dufferin's criticism of them was based upon an incorrect assumption and did not apply to them. 'All movements of the kind in which we are concerned', he said, 'pass though several phases as they run their course. The first is one of ridicule. That is followed, as the movement progresses,

by one of abuse, which is usually succeeded by partial concession and misapprehension of aim, accompanied by warnings against taking "big jumps into the unknown". The final stage of all is a substantial adoption of the object of the movement with some expression of surprise that it was not adopted before. These various phases overlap each other, but between the first and the last the distinction is complete.'[265]

2

Men, Money and Machine

The circular issued in March 1885, to which the Congress is alleged to have owed its origin,[1] had spoken of a 'Conference of the Indian National Union' to be held in Poona from 25 to 31 December 1885.[2] But before the meeting actually took place on 28 December 1885 in Bombay—the change of venue having become necessary at the eleventh hour because of the outbreak of cholera in Poona[3]—it had been decided to call it 'the Indian National Congress'.[4] Though no specific reason was given for the change in nomenclature, it might well have been due to the desire to distinguish the gathering in Bombay from that being held almost simultaneously in Calcutta which was organized by the Indian Association and bore the name of 'the National Conference'.[5]

No particular significance need be attached to the choice of the name 'Congress'. The annual gatherings of many professional and voluntary associations in Britain at that time were called congresses. Though the word 'Congress' was also familiarly associated with the United States of America, it is doubtful whether that country provided any direct inspiration for the choice made in India in 1885.

Though it soon came to be referred to as a 'movement'[6] and a 'party',[7] the Indian National Congress was originally the name of the annual gathering of leading Indian nationalists for three or four days during Christmas-time in some important town of India. Every year they assembled at a different place decided upon at their previous meeting, in order to deliberate upon the important questions of the day and to give some definite and authoritative expression to the public opinion of the country.

By resolving that 'the Indian National Congress re-assemble next year in Calcutta',[8] the very first gathering at Bombay in 1885 decided in principle that the Congress was to be peripatetic.[9] In the beginning it was apparently deemed desirable that the Congress should make the round of the capitals of all the provinces in India.[10] So, after meeting at Bombay in 1885, it met at Calcutta in 1886, at Madras in 1887, and at Allahabad in 1888. In 1889 it should have met at Lahore or Nagpur. The delegates from Panjab who attended the Allahabad Congress in 1888— 'some seventy only in number'[11]—duly staked their claim and extended their invitation. As proof of their earnestness they 'actually subscribed among themselves Rs. 15,000 ... as the nucleus of a fund for defraying the expenses of the Congress'.[12] But the leaders of the Congress decided that it should 'assemble in the Bombay Presidency (either at Bombay itself or at Poona, as may be settled hereafter) on the 26th of December, 1889'.[13]

Hume tried to justify the decision by saying: '... we have to look round the country, and consult the convenience of people residing in all parts of India. This year the Bombay and Madras delegates had to undertake a long journey to be present here. If we go to Lahore next year, the journey will be longer by nearly one thousand miles for the delegates from the Southern Presidencies. We must deal fairly in this matter with all parts of the empire, so we have made up our minds to hold the next Congress in the Bombay Presidency, leaving it to the gentlemen of Bombay and Poona to settle among themselves in which of the two places the meeting should take place.'[14]

Besides the reason publicly advanced by Hume for not agreeing to hold the 1889 Congress at Lahore, there was another reason which probably weighed far more with Congress leaders in taking their decision, though they thought it prudent not to state it in public at that time. The holding of the Congress at Allahabad in 1888 had encountered a great deal of official and officially-inspired opposition and Congress leaders naturally feared that this kind of opposition would be stronger in Panjab, which was a frontier and a more bureaucratically-governed province than the North-Western Provinces. As Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia revealed in his address as chairman of the reception committee of the Lahore Congress in 1893: 'This is the second attempt that has been made towards holding the Congress in the Punjab. The first attempt was made at Allahabad in 1888 when the delegates from this Province offered to invite the next Congress to Lahore but that attempt was infructuous because some of our leaders having recently had experience of the opposition that the Congress had met in the North-Western Provinces entertained apprehensions of greater and more serious difficulties being thrown in our way in this Province.'[15]

The Panjab delegates did 'not desire to dispute the decision arrived at by the [Congress] executive' and loyally, though regretfully, accepted it.[16] Once Lahore was eliminated and it was decided to hold the next Congress at Bombay or Poona, the latter town naturally expected that the choice would fall on it. M.B. Namjoshi, a leading delegate from Poona, remarked at the Allahabad Congress on 29 December 1888: 'On behalf of the people of Poona I am authorized to say that, if it be arranged to hold the Congress in Poona, they will be only too delighted to receive you in that city. For myself I say, don't go to Bombay; you have been there once, but come to Poona, which was to and would have been the birthplace of the Congress, but for a slight miscarriage.'[17] But the possibility of Charles Bradlaugh's attending the 1889 Congress clinched the issue in favour of Bombay.

During the period under review in this book, 1885-1918, the Congress met in thirty-four regular sessions and in one special session. It assembled seven times at Calcutta (1886, 1890, 1896, 1901, 1906, 1911, 1917), six times at Madras (1887, 1894, 1898, 1903, 1908, 1914), five times at Bombay (1885, 1889, 1904, 1915, 1918 special session), three times at Allahabad (1888, 1892, 1910) and Lahore (1893, 1900, 1909), twice at Lucknow (1899, 1916), and once at Nagpur (1891), Poona (1895), Amraoti (1897), Ahmedabad (1902), Banaras (1905), Surat (1907), Bankipur (1912), Karachi (1913), and Delhi (1918).

From the very beginning the leaders of the Congress were anxious that it should meet at other important centres besides the capitals of the several provinces of India. During 1885-1918 this proved to be practicable in Bombay (Bombay, 1885, 1889, 1904, 1915, 1918; Poona, 1895; Ahmedabad, 1902; Surat, 1907; Karachi, 1913), the United Provinces (Allahabad, 1888, 1892, 1910; Lucknow, 1899, 1916; Banaras, 1905), and the Central Provinces and Berar (Nagpur, 1891; Amraoti, 1897), but not in Bengal (Calcutta, 1886, 1890, 1896, 1901, 1906, 1911, 1917),

Madras (Madras, 1887, 1894, 1898, 1903, 1908, 1914), Panjab (Lahore, 1893, 1900, 1909), and Bihar (Bankipur, 1912). Leaving aside Bihar, which was a relatively backward region and did not become a separate province until 1912, it is not easy to explain why the provinces of Bengal, Madras and Panjab could not, during the period 1885-1918, hold a session of the Congress anywhere else except at their capitals.[18]

The Congress was launched with informal 'Select Committees' in a few important centres of India.[19] The precise composition and functions of these committees are not known. The lack of permanent committees at various centres in the country, with whom regular correspondence could be maintained and who could be consulted on important questions all through the year, was soon realized, and at the 1886 Congress at Calcutta it was resolved that 'Standing Congress Committees be constituted at all important centres'.[20] Moving the resolution to this effect, W.C. Bonnerjee remarked: 'My opinion is that permanent Committees of this Congress ought to be constituted in all the provinces of India. Each province will, no doubt, fix the number of its own Committee, and appoint its own Committee men, but a Committee, small or large, is absolutely requisite in every province. Without such Committees it is quite impossible to keep up regular correspondence between all the different parts of the country, and so to arrive in due time at a general agreement as to the various questions on which action is to be taken at the Congress.'[21]

While Bonnerjee was obviously thinking in terms of 'a Committee ... in every province', the resolution spoke of 'Standing Congress Committees ... at all important centres'. In the event, standing Congress committees were constituted both at the capitals of the various provinces and at other important regional centres.[22] Unfortunately, adequate and precise information is not available about the number, composition and functions of these committees. The 'tentative rules' framed at the Madras Congress in December 1887, which were never formally adopted, provided that the 'delegates from any jurisdiction, attending a Congress, shall form the Standing Committee for the ensuing year, and they shall have power to add to their number, and appoint their own executive'. Their 'primary duty' would be 'to promote the political education of the people of their several jurisdictions throughout the year'. They were to be responsible for Congress affairs generally—such as the election of delegates, the notification of subjects that the people of their several jurisdictions desire to see discussed, and the constitution, when necessary, of the reception committee for holding a Congress session.[23] In the Introduction to the report of the 1888 Congress, a standing committee is described as the 'supreme managing body for each circle, which controls the Divisional Committees'.[24] The standing committees obviously consisted of the Congress leaders of the various circles.[25] Their main functions were to remain in touch with each other, to raise funds for Congress work in India and in England, to promote the sale of *India,* and generally to agitate on Congress issues.

The report of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress for 1894-5 says that standing Congress committees existed at that time in the following 43 places in the country: Calcutta, Dacca, Mymensingh, Faridpore, Barisal, Rungpur, Dinajpur, Pubna, Bogra, Jalpaiguri, Rampur-Beauleah, Berhampur, Bhagalpur, Purneah, Chota Nagpur, Bankipur, Mozufferpur, Gaya, North-Western Provinces, Oudh, Punjab, Bombay, Sindh, Ahmedabad, Surat, Sholapur, Belgaum, Dharwar, Bhusaval, Satara, Ahmednagar, Poona, Ichalkeranji, Berar, Nagpur, Madura, Madras, Tanjore, Bellary, Malabar, Salem, Coimbatore, and Ganjam.[26]

It was originally expected that each standing Congress committee would submit a report of its work during the year at the annual session of the Congress. But the response was not

encouraging—in 1888 only Madras and Berar submitted their reports,[27] and in 1889 only Madras did so[28]—and the practice seems to have been discontinued.

The constitution adopted by the Congress in 1899 said, among other things, that 'Provincial Congress Committees shall be organised at the capitals of the different Presidencies and Provinces of India for the purpose of carrying on the work of political education in India ... throughout the year by organising Standing Congress Committees ... and such other means as they may deem proper',[29] but it was silent about the composition and functions of the standing Congress committees.

In the constitution adopted by the Congress in 1908 after the Surat split, no mention was made of standing Congress committees as 'Component Parts of the Organisation'. Instead it talked of 'District Congress Committees or Associations affiliated to the Provincial Congress Committees' and of 'Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees affiliated to the District Congress Committees or Associations'.[30] Obviously the organization of the Congress was now approximating more closely to the administrative model of British India.

The subjects discussed at the first Indian National Congress, which met at Bombay from 28 to 30 December 1885, were few but important. In fact, most of them had acquired a special prominence during the preceding few years. But the agenda for the first Congress was settled only a day before it actually met and this was done in an informal manner. 'During the whole day and far into the night of the 27th', says the official *Report of the First Indian National Congress,* 'informal discussions were carried on between the representatives and the order of the proceedings for the next three days was thus settled.'[31]

Before the meeting of the second Congress at Calcutta in 1886, it was 'generally insisted on ... that representatives ought to be made aware, beforehand, of the principal subjects likely to come under discussion at the Congress, and so be in a position to ascertain, in advance, the views thereon of their constituencies. Accordingly, printed suggestions as to subjects for the consideration of the Congress were issued from several of the provinces.'[32] The *Report of the Second Indian National Congress,* however, adds: 'Unfortunately, admirable as the idea was, the necessary machinery (now provided by the Standing Congress Committees, Resolution XIII of 1886) did not exist for carrying it out in its integrity, and a considerable proportion of the delegates never saw, or even if they saw, never properly considered, in consultation with their constituencies, these important papers of suggestions, which constituted the foundation stones of the subsequent Congressional deliberations. Still, although not as fully circulated as they should have been, a majority of the delegates came "forewarned and forearmed", and even this was a great advance on the procedure of the previous year.'[33]

On 26 December 1886, a day before the formal opening of the second Congress at Calcutta, 'several of the Bengal leaders, and one or two of the most distinguished of the delegates of most of the other provinces, met at the rooms of the British Indian Association, and talked over certain draft resolutions, which had arrived, mainly on the lines of the "suggestions" already circulated, to serve as a preliminary basis for discussion. Some of these resolutions were modified, others were added, and the result was the establishment of a somewhat definite series of proposals to place in the hands of the now fast arriving delegates. These proposals again were modified and added to day by day, as they were discussed and criticised at the friendly conferences already referred to, and some again were further altered at the public sittings ... .'[34]

While adopting, in general, a flexible attitude towards the business of the Congress, its leaders firmly resisted attempts at introducing new subjects at short notice. On the fourth and last day of the Congress, 30 December 1886, the president, Dadabhai Naoroji, remarked: 'I have received several proposals for the introduction of new subjects for discussion. I think it would be very embarrassing, as well as bad in principle, to spring upon the Congress new subjects for which the majority of our delegates are not prepared. I therefore appeal to those gentlemen from whom those proposals have originated not to insist on them, but to reflect that to do so would be unjust to the majority of the delegates, embarrassing to the Congress as a whole, and likely to create a bad precedent and a deal of confusion. So far as my experience goes, I do not think that in any Congress the programme which has once been settled is materially departed from except with the unanimous eonsent of all the delegates. I shall not, therefore, I think, be able to allow any entirely new subject to be brought forward, unless such prove to be the unanimous wish in any case of the entire meeting.'[35]

When S.N. Banerjea enquired of the president whether he would allow a discussion on the Assam Emigration Act, a subject of which due notice had been given, the latter replied: 'I fear that I cannot allow this; the notice you refer to was only given at a very late stage of the proceedings, and many delegates I find are of opinion that this is rather a question for discussion in the Bengal Provincial Congress than in this present National Assemblage.'[36]

The managers of the Congress—the term is used in no pejorative sense—were faced with a difficult task. On the one hand, they realized that a large and amorphous gathering like the Congress was ill suited for serious deliberation and needed to be firmly controlled and guided. On the other hand, they were not unaware of the fact that there was some dissatisfaction in the ranks of the Congress at the manner in which a handful of self-constituted leaders had predetermined and disposed of the business of the meeting.[37] A solution to the problem was found at the third Congress.

Long before the third Congress met at Madras from 27 to 30 December 1887, the local reception committee had written to 'the Standing Congress Committees, all over the country, ... to ascertain and communicate to them the subjects that their people desired to be brought forward at the coming Congress'.[38] A long list of subjects was thus collected and compiled. About the middle of November 1887 this list was, through the several standing committees and newspapers, widely circulated. The delegates to the third Congress were therefore in a far better position than those in the previous year to consider the questions that were likely to be discussed at Madras. 'But', says the *Report of the Third Indian National Congress,* 'there were still two defects, the list was far too long, and though it gave the subjects (e.g., "the reduction of military expenditure,") it in no case formulated the Resolution that the proposers desired to have set forth in regard to them. Of course, the delegates were able to learn generally what their constituents' views were on the leading subjects, but, in many cases they did not know exactly what they thought upon the details of these or exactly how far they desired the Congress to go in regard to them. Moreover, it was apparent to the great bulk of them, that a very large proportion of these subjects (for everything that anybody had formally proposed had been honestly included) were, for one reason or another, unsuited to, or still unripe for, discussion by the National Congress. So, after much private discussion amongst the delegates who had assembled, as many did, before the Congress met, on the day of the inaugural sitting, the whole Congress formally appointed a very strong "Subject Committee", comprising representative men from every province, to weed the list, and to draft Resolutions on such of the subjects as

all were agreed in retaining. Their report formed the basis of the subsequent proceedings (though several of the Resolutions were greatly modified and some subjects added during the course of the debates), and all this constituted a distinct advance on the procedure of former Congresses.'[39]

Some months before the assembling of the Congress at Allahabad in 1888, the local reception committee had called upon all the standing Congress committees to report the subjects which the people of their respective circles desired to have brought before the Congress. All these subjects, proposed by more than half the committees, were then re-circulated, with tentative resolutions framed in regard to each, to all the standing, and by them to the divisional, committees, so that for all these subjects, which comprised the great majority of those actually brought before and discussed by the Congress, the delegates were fully prepared.[40]

After delivering his inaugural address on 26 December 1888, the president of the Allahabad Congress, George Yule, called upon the assembly 'to appoint a Subject Committee, who will discuss the subjects to be brought before the Congress tomorrow and on the subsequent days, frame tentative resolutions on these subjects, and settle the names of the gentlemen who are invited to propose, second, and support these resolutions'. He went on to add: 'Now, it is extremely desirable that the Subject Committee should not be too large and unwieldy, but after consulting the leading delegates from every province, it seems agreed that it is impossible, if its representative character is to be preserved, to reduce the number of the members of this committee below one hundred and six. The numbers to be allotted to each circle have been most carefully considered in consultation with a great number of delegates, and I will ask you to accept these as now settled, viz.:—

'For the Calcutta Circle, viz., Lower Bengal, Orissa, and Assam	18
'For the Behar Circle, viz., the Patna, Bhagalpur, and Hazareebagh Divisions	7
'For the Benares and N.W. Provinces Circles	16
'For the Oudh Circle	8
'For the Punjab and Delhi Circles	17
'For the Sindh Circle	3
'For the Guzerat Circle	4
'For the Bombay Circle	4
'For the Poona Circle	6
'For the Berar Circle	3
'For the Nagpur Circle, viz., the Central Provinces	8
'For the Madras Circle	12'

The president then asked 'the delegates from each circle to elect from amongst themselves the number of delegates [allotted to] their respective circles, to represent them on the subject committee'.[41] After the elections had been 'completed and announced by the President, and ratified unanimously by all the delegates', the 'Subject Committee' gathered together on the president's platform and commenced work. It 'sat till late that night, and resumed work next morning, sitting till 1 p.m.'.[42]

It was not until the 1889 Congress that 'the Subjects Committee' got the name by which it has been known ever since. The *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress* describes it as 'a most important body, for with it rests not only the decision as to what subjects shall primarily be brought before the Congress, but also as to the exact wording of resolutions in regard to

these, which are submitted to the Congress' and whose members are 'elected by all the delegates, all those from each Congress circle electing a sufficient number to represent fully the views of all its various sections'.[43]

The exact composition, functions and significance of the subjects committee are brought out in the Introduction to the *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress,* which says: 'The functions of this Committee are very important and are not, even yet, generally understood by the public. Months before the Congress meets, the Committee of the Circle in which it is to assemble calls upon all the Standing Committees (of which there is one to each Circle), to submit, after consultation with their divisional and sub-divisional Committees, a list of the subjects which they suggest for the consideration of the coming assembly. Their replies are compiled by the Committee first mentioned; subjects proposed by a majority of the Committees are accepted and embodied in a circular to all the Standing or Circle Committees, notifying that these are the subjects which will be submitted by the Reception Committee to the Subjects Committee when it is formed. Subjects proposed by less than half of the committees are not included. Every delegate, therefore, nowadays, knows, or can know if he chooses, and ought to know, before he leaves his province, what the subjects are which will primarily engage the attention of the Congress.

'As soon as the President's inaugural address has been delivered, the assembled delegates of each Circle proceed to elect from amongst themselves the men whom they desire to represent them on the Subjects Committee. This is always a large body; this year it included about one hundred and ten gentlemen of all races and castes, residents of seventy of the largest towns in the Empire, and belonging to every Province therein, except Sind. To this Committee is submitted as a basis of discussion, the list of subjects compiled by the Reception Committee from the replies of all the Standing Committees, and it is this Committee who decide which of these shall be taken up, who frame the resolutions in regard to those that they decide to lay before the assembly, and who select the speakers who are to propose and second these resolutions. Reporters and spectators are excluded from the sittings of this Committee so as to give the utmost freedom of debate, and it is impossible to deny that in this Committee every subject is more effectively and completely threshed out by rapid questions and answers and short speeches lasting two or three minutes only, by committee proceedings, in fact, in which every man present takes an active part, than they can be in the formal speeches of half-a-dozen members in the Congress itself. Matters are always rapidly and satisfactorily disposed of. It is hardly ever necessary to vote, because, according to one of the basal principles of the Congress, subjects in regard to which, after full discussion, considerable difference of opinion continues to exist, are *ipso facto* thrown out. The main object of the Congress is to press upon the attention of the Government of India and the people and Government of England those reforms, and those reforms only, in regard to which the whole country has come to a substantial agreement; in regard to which the people of all provinces, of all races, castes, and creeds, are practically of one mind.

'This is the explanation of that marvellous unanimity often suspiciously commented on by the European critics, that characterizes, as a rule, the Congress debates. The Congress itself, through its elected representatives, weeds out all subjects in regard to which a practical agreement, in all parts of the country and by all parties, has not been arrived at. It is this, too, which ought to give weight to the formal recommendations of the Congress, since these are not proposals advocated by this or that body, this or that province, but only such as are concurred in by the educated and semi-educated classes throughout the Empire.

'Of course, besides the subjects embodied in the Reception Committee's list, many others are brought forward in the Subjects Committee, by one or more province, or even by individual members, and duly discussed; but these rarely secure a sufficient unanimity of assent to permit of their being then submitted to the Congress, though, having thus been brought within the sphere of practical politics, and hence being during the year talked of all over the country, they, not infrequently, are sent up next year from a majority of the committees, and so find a place in the next year's Reception Committee's list.

'This year the Subjects Committee held six sittings extending in the aggregate over fully eighteen hours, not one minute of which was wasted in oratory or useless talk, and it is really to be regretted that neither the Government nor the public can fully realize the care and acuteness with which, not only the subjects which actually came before the Congress, but fully a dozen others, were canvassed and criticised by this most truly representative body, representative to an extent not yet fully realized, except in Congress circles, of the entire culture and intelligence of the nation.'[44]

The size of the subjects committee varied a little from year to year. Generally speaking, it included almost all the leading members from each Congress circle, numbering about one hundred. Each circle 'elected' its own representatives according to a fixed schedule and the 'election' was ratified by the general body. It met immediately after the president's inaugural address on the opening day and each day of the session thereafter except the last, reviewed the proceedings, discussed and drafted the resolutions to be taken up in the general session, and selected the speakers on the resolutions. The control of all real business and debate in the Congress was gradually shifted to this body, which sat in private and came to wield great influence. The public sittings of the Congress were soon reduced to a merely formal passing of resolutions agreed upon in the subjects committee. It was an unwritten rule of the Congress not to take up for discussion any subject which was of a purely local character or which did not command the more or less unanimous agreement of all the provinces.

The composition and procedure of the subjects committee were often criticized by Congressmen. The experience of Banaras in 1905, of Calcutta in 1906, and of Surat in 1907 compelled both the Extremists and the Moderates to pay serious attention to them. The Extremist viewpoint was put forth in an extremely able, informed and reasoned article in the *Bande Mataram,* dated 6 April 1908. It traced the evolution of the subjects committee, examined the current situation and insisted on its reform 'as the first approach towards the democratisation of the Congress'. 'The whole assembly of delegates is too large and too loose a body to discuss what resolutions shall be placed before it or what particular form of words should be used. This has necessarily to be done by a smaller body. But before the Subjects Committee came into existence these questions were decided irresponsibly by a small cabal of leaders in secret. When the first difference arose between the old leaders and younger men, the prospect of a difference of opinion on the platform of the Congress was sufficient to bring about the substitution of a Committee for the cabal. It was a step forward but a very small step. The Committee was nominated by the cabal, not elected by the Congress, with the result that only those who were likely to be subservient to the cabal, their satellites, their mofussil lieutenants or others who were too prominent to be ignored, became members of the Committee. The change widened the basis of the oligarchy, it did not introduce a democratic principle. The Committee met to consent to what the leaders proposed, the Congress met to consent to what the Committee suggested. Freedom of discussion was restricted in the

Committee by the autocratic intervention of dominant members of the cabal, in the Congress it was tabooed as a violation of unity.

'In any future constitution of the Congress the election of the Subjects Committee must be regulated by the principles of democratic representation, not of oligarchic nomination. The state of things during the last two years has been one of transition, the leaders attempting to dictate their choice to the delegates, the delegates attempting to force theirs on the leaders, and the formation of the Subjects Committee has been invariably the occasion of scenes of tumult, confusion and chaos which were painful to all lovers of orderly procedure. The only remedy is the frank acceptance of the principle of democratic representation. At Surat when the Bengali delegates were electing their representatives on the Subjects Committee, Srijut Surendranath Banerji let fall a remarkable expression of sentiment which explains the difficulty felt by the leaders in frankly accepting the principle of district or divisional election which can alone ensure that the Subjects Committee will represent the will of the country. "If the delegates are allowed to elect their representatives," he said, "the best men will not be chosen." The aristocratic nature of the objection was a surprise to many of the delegates, for it contains the very essence of the oligarchic spirit. The distrust of the people, the sense of aristocratic superiority, the confidence of superior wisdom which it conveyed are the stamp of this spirit in all ages. The best men are the men of position, rank, status, the men with a stake in the country, the men who have succeeded and are on the top of the ladder, and these have a right to lead by virtue of their position apart from the will of the people. The party of privilege in all ages have posed as the superior people, the monopolists of wisdom, the *optimates* or best men, the *boni* or good people. The party opposed to them are the ignorant, the pestilent demagogues, the crazy fanatics, the men without stake or substance who wish to create a revolution in order to benefit themselves. If democratic election is allowed, these men will be elected in increasing numbers and shoulder out their betters. This spirit of oligarchic exclusiveness is the secret of all the friction which has been evident and the scenes of anger, strife and disorder, the frequent outbreaks of popular indignation which have marked the Conferences and Congresses since the birth of the democratic spirit. The Congress oligarchs, unwilling to allow that spirit to assert itself, are yet unable to disavow openly the principles of democracy in the name of which they demand from the bureaucracy rights and privileges which they themselves refuse to the rank and file of their own followers. The conflict goes on behind the scenes and the outbreaks in the Conference or Congress are rare and the results of a growing impatience of the evasions, tricks, shufflings by which the leaders try to hold an untenable position. They can neither disown democracy nor frankly accept it. They are eager to keep up its forms, determined to exclude its spirit. ... [But] the democratic spirit cannot be permanently repressed or baffled by evasions. That the constitution must be based on democratic principles is one of the axioms with which we have started. The Subjects Committee is the brain of the Congress and must be democratised if the Congress itself is to be democratic. Otherwise we shall have a repetition of the scenes which we are all anxious to avoid. An oligarchic Subjects Committee preparing resolutions which have to be repeatedly challenged in the full house, is an unworkable arrangement. The delegates must be made to feel that the Committee is really representative of their wishes and opinions and the inclination to scan with suspicion the Subjects Committee's resolutions and amend them in full house, will then disappear.

'The election of the members of the Committee is at present no election at all, but a scramble for the membership. It must be reduced to order and rule by a serious, settled and

deliberate form of election. The representatives of each division in a Province must be allowed to sit separately and vote their choice of representatives for their own division, the names must be written down by a temporary secretary and handed in to the Secretary for the Province who will read out the full list of names to the assembled delegates of the Province. These names should be sent in to the Secretaries of the Congress who will put in the full list as soon as the President's address is over. In this way the business of forming the Subjects Committee can be done quietly, timely and thoroughly. No objection should be allowed from one division against the choice of another division or from one Province against the choice of another Province.

'But the method of election is not the only obstacle in the way of full correspondence between the will of the Subjects Committee and the will of the Congress. The method of discussion in the Committee is at present hampered by irregularities which often prevent the real sense of the Committee from being properly ascertained. It is only when a strong and conscientious President acquainted with the forms of discussion in a free country sits in the chair, that the proceedings of the Committee are worthy of itself. The irregularities arise partly from ignorance of the rules of the debate, partly from over-eagerness to make points and score tactical success. The only remedy is for the rules of discussion to be formalized, made known to each member and rigidly enforced by the President. When this is done, the habit of discussion will gradually create a public sentiment against excess of party spirit. Finally, the secrecy of the sitting is a feature which ought not to be continued. It is undemocratic in its origin, fosters irresponsibility and helps to create misunderstanding and facilitate crooked methods. There is no reason why our discussions should not be carried out in the full light of day, since we have nothing to conceal; on the contrary, the knowledge of the discussion in the Subjects Committee will serve the same end as the publicity of Parliamentary discussions in free countries. It will keep up a living interest in the people, educate the public mind to deal with political questions in a graver and more responsible spirit, accustom the representatives of the people to feel that they are speaking and acting with the eye of all India upon them and train the country to prepare itself [in] the habits of mind, speech and action which are necessary for the success of representative government. Secrecy is the enemy of good government, but it is still more fatal to self-government. Publicity is the very breath of life to democratic institutions.

'These then are the changes which we would suggest for the democratisation of the Subjects Committee—the members to be elected by the divisions of each Province by a regular and orderly method, the discussions of the Committee to be regulated by fixed rules of procedure and the sitting to be thrown open to the Press and the public or at least to the delegates. When these changes have been effected, the foundations of representative government in India will have been laid, for it is only out of the Congress that representative institutions can arise in India. The Congress is the seed and only by the proper development of the seed can the life of the tree be ensured.'[45]

The constitution adopted by the Convention Committee at Allahabad in April 1908 contained the following provision for the composition of the Subjects Committee:

'Article XXIV. The Subjects Committee to be appointed at each session of the Congress to settle its programme of business to be transacted shall, as far as possible, consist of:

Not more than 15 representatives of Madras;

Not more than 15 representatives of Bombay;

Not more than 20 representatives of United Bengal;

Not more than 15 representatives of United Provinces;

Not more than 13 representatives of Punjab (including N.W.F. Province);
Not more than 7 representatives of Central Provinces;
Not more than 5 representatives of Behar;
Not more than 5 representatives of Berar;
Not more than 2 representatives of Burma;
Not more than 5 representatives of British Committee of the Congress;
and additional 10 representatives of the Province in which the Congress is held;
all the above-mentioned representatives being elected, in accordance with Rule 9 of the "Rules" appended, by the Delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces.

'The President of the Congress for the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all ex-Presidents and ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees, the General Secretaries of the Congress, the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year, not exceeding six in number, and all the members of the All-India Congress Committee for the year, shall, in addition, be *ex-officio* members of the Subjects Committee.'[46]

'Article XXV. The President of the Congress for the year shall be *ex-officio* Chairman of the Subjects Committee.'[47]

Rule no. 9, referred to above, said: 'The election of members of the Subjects Committee shall take place at meetings of the Delegates of different Provinces held at such place and time as may be announced by the President. Each such meeting, in case of contest, shall have a Chairman who will first receive nominations, each nomination being made by at least five Delegates, and then after announcing all the nominations he may ask each Delegate to give in a list of the members he votes for, or he may put the nominated names to the vote in such order as he pleases, or if there are only two rival lists, he shall take votes on those lists and announce the result of the election and forthwith communicate the same to the General Secretaries of the Congress.'[48]

Rule no. 10 laid down that 'The Subjects Committee shall deliberate upon and prepare the agenda paper for the business to be transacted at the next Congress sitting. The General Secretaries shall, as far as practicable, distribute among the Delegates a printed copy of the agenda paper for each sitting, before the sitting commences.'[49]

Rule no. 29 provided that 'The meetings of the Subjects Committee shall be open only to the members of that Committee and the meeting of the Delegates of each Province at divisions shall be open to the Delegates of that Province only ... .'[50]

Except for allowing representation to each division and making the proceedings of the subjects committee open to the public, the 1908 constitution conceded, at least on paper, almost all that the *Bande Mataram* had demanded in its article of 6 April 1908. It provided for a regular composition of the subjects committee, with proportionate representation to the provinces, and it laid down clear and specific rules for the election of its members and the conduct of its proceedings. But with the Congress, from 1908 onwards, being dominated more firmly than ever before by the Moderate caucus, with attendance falling sharply, and with provinces being inadequately and unevenly represented at its sessions, the character and proceedings of the subjects committee showed little improvement in practice. The Congress oligarchs—both national and provincial—packed the subjects committee with their nominees. They prepared lists of would-be members which they managed to get approved by the provincial delegates. Elections were seldom held. The metropolitan representatives far outnumbered those from the *mofussil* on the subjects committee. But the situation changed with

the 1914 Congress at Madras, which was required to deal with the highly controversial question of a Congress compromise and which was also attended by many delegates who were unwilling blindly to follow the oligarchs. In a letter to the editor of the *Hindu,* 6 January 1915, S. Satyamurti described in detail the autocratic, unconstitutional and perfunctory manner in which the Madras representatives on the subjects committee had been chosen.[51] Writing to the editor of the same paper a few days later, T. Rangachari complained about the numerical preponderance of the representatives from Madras city over those from the *mofussil* on the subjects committee and also about the prevailing system of voting by provinces in the subjects committee which did not allow the feelings of the majority in the Congress or in the country to be faithfully reflected in the decisions of that body.[52] The *Leader,* 22 January 1916, referred to another aspect of the working of the subjects committee when it wrote: 'More interesting always than the Congress is its Subjects Committee. In the open Congress no debate takes place. Speeches of the more or less usual type on resolutions, very few of which are new, are delivered by persons who it generally happens have previously spoken on the self-same subjects, who have little that is new to say and who do not say it in a particularly attractive style because they have been given no time to prepare themselves in the way of putting together new facts or thinking out new arguments. [In the Subjects Committee] alone there is anything approaching a discussion. ... Our immediate suggestion therefore is ... that delegates who are not elected to the Subjects Committee should be permitted to witness its proceedings as visitors, without the right to take part in discussions or to vote. The debates are sometimes intellectual, have often an educational value, and are always interesting. When a person, generally of modest means, spends a good sum of money and makes a long journey in order to join the Congress, it is not fair to forbid him to watch the part of the Congress which is of the greatest interest, and it would be more useful from the Congress and the public point of view to stimulate his interest in the national organization and its work by encouraging him to profit by the debates. We have known year after year numbers of delegates feel the keenest disappointment at being warned off the Subjects Committee tent. The possible objection to the adoption of our suggestions is that the confidential character of the Committee's proceedings is apt to be destroyed. Is the confidence strictly maintained at present? The newspapers of the closing dates of December and the opening dates of January every year furnish the best answer to the question. Gossip passes from mouth to mouth even now. The risk that will be run by permission being accorded to delegates generally to witness the Committee's proceedings, will be only slightly more than at present, and it is well worth taking in view of the general feeling of satisfaction that will be produced in the minds of delegates.'[53] The *Leader's* suggestion, like that made by the *Bande Mataram* on 6 April 1908, to do away with the private and confidential character of the proceedings of the subjects committee, if accepted, would have been a great boon to the historian, but the arguments against its acceptance were weighty and numerous and the Congress could never accept it.

In the Introduction to the *Report of the Twenty-Eighth Indian National Congress Held at Karachi on the 26th, 27th and 28th of December 1913,* Wacha gave the following vivid description of the proceedings of the subjects committee of that year: 'Generally, the first evening occupies from 2 to 3 hours in discussing and putting into body and form the resolutions to be placed before the Congress on the following day. But on this occasion [at Karachi] the sittings of the Subjects Committee occupied full four hours and more. Indeed, it may be said with truth that the real debate at Congress-time is to be heard in the room of the Subjects

Committee. There, the *pros* and *cons* of all the important resolutions on the burning questions of the day are threshed out with as much ability, perseverance and persistency as knotty questions in a Select Committee of the House of Commons. It is after such a thorough discussion that resolutions are framed and brought forward on the Congress platform. It is not surprising that these resolutions are more or less carried with unanimity after the principal speakers and supporters have had their say. Having become fully conversant with the arguments and facts for and against a given question, it is not difficult for them to elaborate those, each in his own way, in the open Congress. Not that there are not dissenticnts. But such is the discipline of the Congress and such the spirit of tolerance which prevails among the delegates assembled that the dissenting persons subordinate their own views to the views of the majority as already formulated in the resolutions framed after thorough discussion in the Subjects Committee. ... amendments are generally rare, though the constitution fully provides where there is a determinate difference of opinion how votes are to be taken by delegates belonging to each province. At Karachi some of the subjects involved knotty questions of a most intricate character. All the same they were well thought out and argued and fair decisions arrived at. On such occasions the discussion sometimes assumes an animated if not acid aspect. Lively parleys take place. But in the end resolutions are arrived at which are deemed fairly passable. It is in this spirit of mutual toleration that all subjects are considered. Given a well-experienced President, accustomed to public life and conversant with order and procedure, everything passes off smoothly and harmoniously while there is a distinct advantage in the way in which the give-and-take method finds fair play. And as the Subjects Committee consists of both old and new delegates there is offered a kind of education and experience which is of the utmost value. The restraining influence of the seniors, with their long experience, has a marked effect on the younger and more impulsive or impetuous. So in due course the juniors themselves are able to get a good hearing and in time become practised and experienced Congressmen. Thus the amalgam works most successfully.'[54] This was a rather idyllic account of the functioning of the subjects committee of the Congress, but there can be no doubt that it provided an excellent training ground for democracy.

On the proposal of A.O. Hume (Bengal), which was seconded by S. Subramania Iyer (Madras), supported by K.T. Telang (Bombay), and unanimously carried, W.C. Bonnerjee was elected president of the first Congress held at Bombay, 28-30 December 1885.[55] The understanding to have Bonnerjee as president was probably reached at the 'informal discussions ... between the representatives'[56] on 27 December, the day before the formal opening of the Congress. Bonnerjee was a highly anglicized Bengali Brahman and a close friend of Hume.[57] A leading member of the Calcutta bar, he was universally respected for his character, intellect and wealth. He was not much of a politician or orator, though he had recently, in 1884, helped to organize the Indian Union at Calcutta.[58] His election as president of the first Congress was due mainly to his friendship with Hume, the recognition of his abilities as a tactful man of business, and a gesture of good will on the part of Bombay towards Bengal. It also established a healthy precedent that the president of the Congress should be chosen from a province other than the one in which the Congress was being held.

Bengal returned the compliment to Bombay in 1886 by electing Dadabhai Naoroji as president of the second Congress held at Calcutta.[59] A Parsi who felt equally at home in Bombay and London, Naoroji was a senior, seasoned and well-known public figure. As J.K.

Mukerji observed, while proposing his name for the presidency of the second Congress: 'Warm devotedness to his country, a life spent in active participation of every public movement for her welfare, distinguished abilities, and singular moderation both in aspirations and expressions,—what more could be desired in one whom we wish to guide the deliberations of the Congress.'[60]

Long before the third Congress met at Madras in December 1887, Syed Ahmed had already launched his campaign against it. As a counterpoise it was considered necessary by the managers of the Congress to have a Muslim as president of the 1887 session. Their choice fell upon B. Tyabji, an eminently successful and liberal-minded barrister from Bombay who was on friendly terms with many Congress leaders and generally sympathized with the objectives of the movement. He 'was thought to be the fittest man to contradict the rumours that had been sedulously cast abroad that this was a Hindu Congress and that Mahomedan gentlemen had no sympathy with it'.[61]

After a Hindu, a Parsi, and a Muslim had successively presided over the first three sessions of the Indian National Congress, the managers of the organization were naturally anxious that the fourth session, scheduled to be held at Allahabad in December 1888, should have a Eurasian as its president. The person whom they wanted to select for this office was D.S. White, an educator, a friend of Hume, the leader of the Eurasian community in south India, and a sympathizer of the Congress. But, as W.C. Bonnerjee revealed in 1889, 'at the time when it became necessary to select a President [for the fourth Congress] the man amongst the Eurasian community whom the whole of this country would have hailed with one voice as President of the Congress, Mr. D.S. White, was lying ill in bed; and while he was in that condition it would have been improper for us to ask any other Eurasian gentleman to take his place. ... Failing Mr. White, we had to go to that other community in India, the Anglo-Indian community, and there we found ... Mr. George Yule.'[62] D.S. White died on 1 February 1889 and the Congress could never find another Eurasian worthy enough to be its president.

Before the fourth Congress assembled at Allahabad in late December 1888 government opposition to it had become particularly marked and high officials like Dufferin and Auckland Colvin had publicly criticized its objectives and methods. The choice of George Yule as president of the fourth Congress was therefore highly significant and opportune. He was a leading member of one of the famous British mercantile houses in India. He had been president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and sheriff of Calcutta. He represented the best type of non-official Briton in India. He had the box-wallah's natural and healthy distrust of the competition-wallah. He had 'warm sympathies with the main objects of the Congress'[63] and strongly advocated the reform of the legislative councils in India. In electing Yule as its president the Congress was, as P.M. Mehta pointed out on the occasion, 'doing homage to that bond of union which has brought Englishmen and Indians together' and 'giving the most complete guarantee of ... [its] loyalty'.[64]

The desire on the part of Congress leaders to prove the loyal, moderate and non-racial character of their movement also prompted the selection of Sir William Wedderburn as president of the fifth Congress held at Bombay in 1889.[65] Wedderburn had been the most popular British official of his time in India and his name is imperishably associated with that of Hume in the foundation of the Congress. Ever since his retirement and return to England in 1887 he had been actively engaged in promoting the cause of the Congress in that country. This was probably another reason why he was chosen to preside in 1889. At that time the question of reforming the Indian legislative councils was on the British parliamentary anvil and the

Congress, despairing of the British bureaucracy in India, was increasingly inclined to make a determined effort to enlist the support of the British democracy. The presence of Charles Bradlaugh, along with Wedderburn, at the Bombay Congress in 1889 served to underline this fact.

The 1890 Congress at Calcutta chose P.M. Mehta as its president. In proposing him, R.C. Mitter remarked: 'By his distinguished career at the Bar of the Bombay High Court, and the conspicuous part he has borne in so many important movements and questions, the name of Mr. Pherozeshah Mehta has become almost a household word to all educated persons in India. He enjoys the confidence, not only of the province to which he belongs, but also of the sister provinces.'[66] Mehta had played a leading role in the Congress movement ever since its inception. He was the most prominent public figure of Bombay. A successful barrister, a powerful orator, and a born leader of men, Mehta richly deserved to be president of the Congress. But the choice of a second Parsi and a third Bombayite as its president by the Congress within five years of is existence needs further explanation. Mehta had been on intimate terms with W.C. Bonnerjee and M.M. Ghose, the two most important leaders of the Congress in Calcutta, since the 1860s when they were all together in London studying for the bar, and the desire of the latter to honour an old friend cannot be entirely ruled out as a factor of some consequence in the selection of Mehta. Moreover, the choice of Mehta as president in 1890 might also have been dictated by the anxiety on the part of the managers of the Congress to check the marked defection of the Parsis from the movement. However, Mehta's was not the first name which was considered. The *Bengalee,* 20 December 1890, quoted the *Bombay Gazette* as saying that initially Herbert Gladstone was approached, but he declined because of prior commitments; later R.L. Mitra was approached, but he was old and infirm; then W. Gantz was sounded, but he pleaded difficulties; so, finally, it was decided to have P.M. Mehta as president of the Calcutta Congress in December 1890.[67]

In an obvious attempt to heal the breach caused by the recent controversy over the Age of Consent Bill, Hume recommended 'an orthodox Hindu for President' of the 1891 session of the Congress to be held at Nagpur.[68] Opinion generally favoured the selection of Pandit Ajudhianath. A Kashmiri lawyer from the North-Western Provinces who enjoyed in an almost equal degree the trust and confidence of all sections of the community, Ajudhianath did not have the distinction of being one of the founding fathers of the Congress, but ever since joining the movement in 1887 he had been one of its main pillars of strength. As chairman of the reception committee, he had been chiefly responsible for the success of the Allahabad Congress in 1888. At the 1889 Congress at Bombay he was elected joint general secretary of the organization. But Ajudhianath was, as P.M. Mehta put it, 'as modest and unselfish as he [was] public-spirited, patriotic, and energetic'.[69] He declined to accept the presidency of the Congress and instead suggested that the honour should go to somebody from the southern presidency. The most obvious choice from Madras would have been S. Subramania Iyer, who was equally respected by the public and the government and whose name 'had been originally proposed by several committees for the Presidentship'.[70] But his elevation to the judgeship of the Madras high court shortly before the meeting of the Congress at Nagpur in December 1891 'rendered it impossible for him to take part in any political movement'.[71] The choice then fell on P. Ananda Charlu, a leading lawyer from Madras and 'a member of that small but illustrious band which originally founded the Congress at Bombay, and ever since then ... firmly stood by it'.[72]

The 1892 session of the Congress at Allahabad was to have been presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji. He had only recently been elected as member of the British Parliament and both the country and the Congress were anxious to honour the first Indian who succeeded in getting elected to the British House of Commons. But at the eleventh hour Naoroji became involved in defending his election against a petition filed by his defeated rival and could not manage to come out to India. As the 1892 meeting was the first since the Congress began in 1885 at which Hume was unable to be present, an able and experienced person was required to guide its proceedings as president. This was especially so because the movement had become badly divided over the recent Age of Consent Bill, and there was renewed official annoyance with it because of Hume's 'seditious' circulars. The choice therefore fell on W.C. Bonnerjee, who had presided over the first session in 1885 and was at that time joint general secretary of the organization. In his communication to the 1892 Congress, Naoroji had remarked that it was time that a new departure was made in the Congress programme, and that it should begin a new cycle. Several speakers at the 1892 Congress referred to this message and remarked that it was most appropriate that W.C. Bonnerjee who inaugurated the first cycle should be presiding over the inauguration of the second cycle.[73] D.E. Wacha described Bonnerjee as 'the stoutest and most ardent advocate the Congress has, and its strongest pillar too'.[74]

The Lahore Congress of 1893 was unique in many ways. It was the first session of the Congress to be held in Panjab. It was presided over by the first Indian member of the British Parliament, Dadabhai Naoroji. And it was the last session of the Congress at which A.O. Hume was present.

For the presidentship of the 1894 Congress at Madras, the British Committee in London, at the insistence of the local reception committee, which wanted a Member of Parliament to preside, selected Alfred Webb, a prominent member of the Irish Parliamentary Party.[75] In his presidential address he said: 'Having already placed in the chair two Scotchmen [George Yule and William Wedderburn], you have now chosen an Irishman. Doubtless, after a becoming interval with native Presidents, you will call an Englishman. My nationality is the principal ground for my having been selected. ... On your invitation I take the position that was intended for a great fellow-countryman of my own. However, I do not question the fitness of your choice, for I am representative in several respects. I was nurtured in the conflict against American slavery. In the words of William Lloyd Garrison, the founder of that movement, "My country is the world; my countrymen are all mankind." To aid in the elevation of my native land has been the endeavour of my riper years. In the words of Daniel O'Connell, "My sympathies are not confined to my own green island. I am a friend to civil and religious liberty all over the world." I hate tyranny and oppression wherever practised, more especially if practised by my own Government, for then I am in a measure responsible. I have felt the bitterness of subjection in my own country. I am a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party. I am one of the Indian Parliamentary Committee. I am a Dissenter, proud of the struggles of my Quaker forefathers for freedom of thought and action: a Protestant returned by a Catholic constituency [West Waterford]—a Protestant living in a Catholic country, testifying against craven fears of a return to obsolete religious bitterness and intolerance—fears in your country and mine worked upon to impede the progress of liberty. ... While most anxious not to implicate your cause with Irish politics, or the relations between Great Britain and Ireland, I may occasionally illustrate your affairs by reference to my own country. Your interests are in fact closely involved in some effectual settlement of the Irish question. One of your principal

and most just complaints is that no sufficient attention is given to your affairs in Parliament. ... But at the present the Imperial Parliament is occupied largely with the affairs of under five millions of people, and ministries rise and fall with reference to the question of Ireland, and not in connection with great Imperial interests. The entire Empire is concerned in the speedy settlement of the Irish question.'[76] Webb was the choice of the British Committee of the Congress which was anxious to win friends and allies in the British Parliament for the Indian cause, particularly among members of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The chairman of the Madras Congress reception committee, P. Rungiah Naidu, made a pointed reference to this in his address. He emphasized the difficulty of influencing the 'selfish' British bureaucracy in India and the extreme importance of educating public opinion in Britain and strengthening Congress organization there. 'We have secured', he said, 'the sympathy of a large number of Members of Parliament, while the English press no longer affects silent contempt ... We are very anxious to draw closer the tie of sympathy between us and our English friends and rouse greater interest in that country on behalf of our movement. It was this aspect of the situation that induced us to invite a member of Parliament to preside over our deliberations, and on our having been able to secure you, Sir—Mr. Alfred Webb, through your truly patriotic and condescending fellow feeling, we have every reason to congratulate ourselves. Through you we are confident of enlisting the sympathy of every important section of the House of Commons as well as of those true sons of Britain whose generosity and sense of justice are, like their love of freedom, of world-wide celebrity.'[77]

Strife-torn Poona in 1895 needed someone who could bring a touch of healing to its session and enthuse it by his eloquence. The choice fell on S.N. Banerjea, who was at that time the most popular Congressman in the whole country. In the Age of Consent Bill controversy in the early 1890s, he had sided with the orthodox. Even in the more recent dispute over the holding of the social conference in the Congress *pandal* which convulsed Poona for months, he had put the interests of the Congress first and acted as a peacemaker. The chairman of the Poona Congress reception committee, V.M. Bhide, said of him that he 'joins in himself all that is good and enlightened in young and in old India' and that he had been working 'with a zeal and energy that has won for him the foremost place in the heart of what may be called the hope and blossom of coming years—the hearts of many thousands of students in all parts of the country'.[78] P. Ananda Charlu remarked that Banerjea combined 'in himself the most stirring eloquence, the most untiring zeal, the deepest earnestness and incessant activity'.[79] R.N. Mudholkar described Banerjea as 'a man who is from the people, he is of the people, and he is thus eminently fitted to preside over this Congress in the name of the people'.[80]

Calcutta obviously preferred a Bombayite to preside over the Congress session held there. So, in 1896, for the third time in succession, it chose a prominent citizen of Bombay. R.M. Sayani was a Khoja Muslim, a lawyer, a founder member of the Congress, a member of the imperial legislative council, and a friend of P.M. Mehta. Among other reasons, his selection was made in order to vindicate the national character of the Congress and to promote better relations between Hindus and Muslims. Proposing his name for the presidency, Pandit Bishambharnath of Allahabad said: 'The distinguished lawyer whose name I now have the honour to propose is ... a most enlightened and public-spirited citizen of Bombay. ... He is an influential and respected leader of his own community—the Khowja Muhammadans. ... His election will, I trust tend also to silence those in the opposition who still assert that the Muhammadans entirely stand aloof from the Congress movement and look upon it with disapprobation.'[81]

By 1897 it was clearly the turn of Madras to provide a president for the Congress. The last—and the only—time it had done so was in 1891. The number of senior public men who qualified for the high office was much smaller in Madras than in Bengal or Bombay. The choice fell upon the 40-year old C. Sankaran Nair, who was an advocate and a member of the local legislative council. 'The year 1897 was a year of calamities to the Indian people. Famine, pestilence, earthquake, floods, fires, war, political persecutions, race feeling, distrust—all contributed to fill the cup of human misery to the brim. Even the proverbial Oriental Fatalism winced under the combined effect of these misfortunes, and men asked each other what had this country done to deserve this heavy trial.'[82] It was seriously suggested that the Congress should be postponed. The Introduction to the Congress report of the year described Sankaran Nair 'as an excellent specimen of the war-like community of the Nairs of Malabar. Of a fine presence and pleasing countenance, a high and thoughtful forehead, his very appearance is prepossessing and he looked an admirable President.'[83] S.N. Banerjea proposed his name for the presidency and said: 'Madras now gives us the second President, Bombay has given us three Presidents, Bengal has given us two, Madras has given us one. Madras now comes up to the standard of Bengal. We have very arduous duties before us. There is no mistake that we stand face to face with one of the greatest crises which have developed themselves in the history of this country. We are at the parting of the ways. Our rulers, after having pursued a career of beneficence for more than half a century, seem all of a sudden to be staggered at the marvellous success of their own work. They pause, they hesitate, they linger, they would fain go back. At such a crisis we need careful and wise statesmanlike guidance, and I feel convinced that you will have such guidance from ... Mr. Sankaran Nair. He is a prominent leader of the great community to which he belongs, one of the foremost citizens of Madras, a honoured and illustrious leader of the Congress movement.'[84] The real reason why a mild, moderate and relatively minor Malayalee was chosen to preside over the Amraoti Congress in the year which witnessed the Queen's jubilee and is said to have marked the beginning of the 'Indian Unrest', was given by M.V. Joshi while seconding the motion for the election of Sankaran Nair: 'This year there were peculiar circumstances and there were peculiar difficulties, in the way of the Reception Committee here, and not the least of them was the selection of a President. For, as you are all aware, the situation of this year made it incumbent on us to select a President to whom no exception could be taken. Gentlemen, it required a really unique combination of three most essential qualities of unswerving devotion to the Congress cause, unquestionable loyalty, and what is above all, the most unblemished character. I am perfectly certain that you will find all these qualities in the most harmonious blend in the President that you are now going to elect.'[85]

The main and the immediate reason why A.M. Bose was elected to preside over the Madras Congress of 1898 was the valuable work that he had done on behalf of the Congress and the country during the preceding months in England, but he possessed qualities of the head and the heart which entitled him to become, in the words of Mudholkar, 'the uncrowned king of the [Indian] people'.[86] Proposing his name, Ananda Charlu described him as 'a very great friend of this country, a very great friend of religion, a very great friend of morality and progress', whose 'is the most beneficent face to look at; ... [whose] is a life which is a model to everybody; ... [whose] is an eloquence which you will very soon hear ... with admiration'.[87] Mudholkar, who seconded the proposal, remarked: 'He [Bose] has been active all round, he did not confine himself to political questions. Politics, education, social amelioration of the people in all their branches—they have claimed equal attention from him. ... Such a man whose activity is not

confined to one direction is in every way fit to preside over our deliberations; and if this assembly confines itself to political questions every one of its members has, I know, the deepest interest in all questions, social, religious, moral and political.'[88]

Bengalis dominated some of the professions in the towns of the United Provinces and were, therefore, not particularly liked by the sons of the soil, but of the six sessions of the Congress held in the United Provinces during 1885 and 1918 no less than three were presided over by Bengalis (Allahabad, 1892: W.C. Bonnerjee; Lucknow, 1899: R.C. Dutt; Lucknow, 1916: A.C. Mazumdar). In 1899 R.C. Dutt, though an ex-Indian civil servant, was rewarded with the presidency of the Lucknow Congress because he had dared cross swords with Curzon and during the last two years done commendable work on behalf of India in England. Proposing his name for the presidency, Pandit Bishambharnath said: ' ... he is a genius, he is a scholar, a profound scholar, ... [and] a statesman ... His knowledge of the economic condition of India, of Revenue Laws, of Revenue questions, and of the Indian administration is very profound. With moderation and tact, he combines a rare soundness of judgement.'[89] Wacha, who seconded the proposal, underlined Dutt's qualities as a scholar, administrator, statesman and economist, and quoted the remark of W.S. Caine, the well-known British politician and friend of India, about Dutt: 'His long and honourable record in the Civil Service of his country, his clear candid patriotism and his residence in this country [England] for the last three years, where he has won the confidence of leading politicians of all classes, eminently fit him for this distinguished position [of presidentship of the Congress].'[90]

Until 1899 the choice of the president of the Congress each year rested mainly with the local reception committee and was made in consultation with Congress leaders and committees in other parts of India and in England. The constitution adopted in 1899 entrusted the Indian Congress Committee with the responsibility of selecting the president.[91] The Committee's first choice of Pandit Bishambharnath as president for the 1900 Congress scheduled to be held at Lahore was unexceptionable.[92] Pandit Bishambharnath was a veteran and universally respected Congressman and the United Provinces had not so far provided any president to the Congress. But, apparently on grounds of ill health, Pandit Bishambharnath declined the honour.[93] The secretary of the Indian Congress Committee, Wacha, in consultation with Mehta then chose N.G. Chandavarkar.[94] The choice of Chandavarkar, whose appointment as a judge of the Bombay high court was also announced shortly afterwards, caused a good deal of disappointment and anger among many Congressmen throughout the country. Chandavarkar was a good orator and social reformer, but he had not taken any interest in the Congress since the late 1880s. The *Mahratta* wrote that his selection as president 'was not desirable as it was setting a bad example of the highest honour being conferred upon one who was all along an indifferent political worker and a worse Congressman'.[95] A correspondent of the *Hindu* observed: 'There is a fear that the mischievous idea that the whole show of the Congress is run by a few without much regard for those on whose co-operation the institution depends, which is now and then put forward by our enemies, will begin to find favour in our own camp.'[96]

It would appear that from 1900 onwards partisan considerations began to weigh more prominently than ever before in the selection of presidents of the Congress. The choice for the presidency of the Calcutta Congress in 1901 was D.E. Wacha. If any Indian deserved the highest badge of honour for his patriotic services to the Congress and the country, it was Wacha. As W.C. Bonnerjee rightly said of him, for years 'he has been the life and soul of this movement'[97] in India; or as Mudholkar remarked, 'So far as ... onerous, hard, unostentatious

work is concerned, ... I can say with confidence, there is none in India who comes up to him.'[98] But with all his great qualities and services to the nation, Wacha was, like Chandavarkar, a party man. He was a protégé of Mehta and a member of the so-called 'Congress caucus'. Though his name was recommended by the Indian Congress Committee, he was known to be the choice of a party.

With the suppression of the Indian Congress Committee at the Calcutta Congress of 1901 even the fig-leaf was removed from the Congress autocracy. Without even the pretence of consulting Congress leaders and committees in the other provinces, Mehta and Wacha invited S.N. Banerjea to preside over the 1902 Congress scheduled to be held at Ahmedabad mainly in order to set up 'a counter-attraction and a counter-influence' to the great Delhi Darbar being held almost simultaneously.[99] The selection of Banerjea as president for the second time within seven years, in total disregard of the claims of other worthy men, particularly K.C. Banerji, whose name had been actively canvassed, was severely criticized by many Congressman. It is true that an orator like S.N. Banerjea was required to make the Ahmedabad Congress a popular show, but he was, after all, a party man.

In 1903 the claims of K.C. Banerji were once again ignored by the Congress oligarchy. This was unfortunate in the sense that the Congress thus lost an opportunity, which never recurred, of having an Indian Christian, who was in every way qualified for the post, as its president. It must, however, be added that the omission was due to partisan, not communal, considerations. The man whom the Congress oligarchs chose in preference to the able but unassuming Christian lawyer was Lal Mohan Ghose, an orator of a sort, who in the 1880s held out the promise of a brilliant political career, but soon 'became a political *yogi*'.[100] For many years he had not only kept away from the Congress, but also occasionally worked against it and its leaders in Bengal. He was 'dragged ... out of his political *yogism*'[101] in the vain hope of reinforcing the declining strength and influence of the old guard in the Congress.

The president of the 1904 Congress at Bombay was Sir Henry Cotton, who had retired a couple of years previously as chief commissioner of Assam following serious differences with Curzon, and had since his return to England busied himself actively on behalf of India in the British Committee and outside. He had all through his career as a civil servant evinced a keen and sympathetic interest in India and her people. Speaking as chairman of the reception committee of the Bombay Congress, Mehta described Cotton as an 'Anglo-Indian Civilian, who has, not yesterday or today, but throughout a career rising from the lowest to almost the highest step of the Civilian ladder, uniformly and consistently realized that he best served the interests of his own country and the great service to which he belonged, by strictly and faithfully adhering to a policy of true righteousness and sympathy'.[102] Proposing his name for the presidency, S.N. Banerjea said: 'He [Cotton] loved and trusted the people and they reciprocated his sentiments with enthusiastic gratitude. I think ... I am not guilty of the slightest exaggeration when I say that within the life-time of this generation no member of the Bengal Civil Service comes within a measurable distance of the popularity it was the high privilege of Sir Henry to have enjoyed during his official career and which, now that he has retired, is crystallised into enduring affection and widespread admiration for the noble qualities of his head and heart.' Banerjea pointed out that Cotton would have become lieutenant-governor of Bengal, if he had 'learned the chameleon art of trimming his opinions to suit the passing whims of the powers that be' and was not 'fixed and unalterable in his principles and fearless in their expression'.[103] Cotton's name had been suggested for the presidency of the 1903 Congress, but

W.C. Bonnerjee had counselled against it, saying that Cotton was a 'disappointed man' because he had not been appointed lieutenant-governor of Bengal, and his 'prominent connection with the Congress would give rise to all sorts of rumours and ... the cause would suffer'. But Bonnerjee had added that in 'a few years' time' when the real reasons why Cotton 'had to leave the service are forgotten he would be a tower of strength to us as President of the Congress'.[104] With the anti-Curzon feeling growing fast in the country, Cotton was called upon to preside over the 1904 Congress. There was another reason why Cotton was invited to be the president of the 1904 Congress. The attendance at the Madras Congress in 1903 had been extremely poor. A British president generally attracted a larger number of delegates and visitors to a Congress session than an Indian one, and it was naturally expected that with Cotton as president the Bombay Congress would be a greater success than the Madras Congress had been.

On 5 May 1903 W.C. Bonnerjee had written to Gokhale: 'I should like to see Mudholkar, Malaviya and yourself as the President of the Congress in 1903, 1904 and 1905 in succession.'[105] Gokhale was younger than the other two, but his chance came much earlier and he presided over the Banaras Congress of 1905 at the age of 39. He had won the honour because of his ability, industry, devotion and sacrifice. He had distinguished himself as a teacher, a journalist, a public worker, a member of the provincial and imperial legislative councils, and more recently as a joint general secretary of the Congress and its 'envoy extraordinary' in England. The 'inner Committee of the Benares Congress' insisted and Gokhale became 'the "uncrowned king" of the Indian people for three days'[106] in late December 1905.

Hardly had the Banaras Congress ended when speculation about who was going to preside over the next Congress at Calcutta started. On 26 January 1906 W.C. Bonnerjee wrote to Gokhale: 'I hear that the next Congress will meet at Calcutta, and that it is proposed that either B.G. Tilak or Lajpat Rai will be asked to be the President. Between you and me I do not think either of these gentlemen is fitted for the post ... You see Tilak is not quite the man for the post and Lajpat Rai's views are not in accordance with those we hold.'[107] Bonnerjee, instead, suggested that Mudholkar should be chosen president of the Calcutta Congress in recognition of his services to the organization, and he also wrote to B.N. Basu to the same effect.[108] When in mid-1906 some Maharashtrian and Bengali Extremists started a campaign to get Lajpat Rai elected as president of the Congress, Wacha wrote to Gokhale: 'Today Lajpat Rai and tomorrow Tilak! Where will the Congress be?'[109] Wacha even threatened that Bombay might secede from the Congress if Lajpat Rai were elected president of the forthcoming session.[110]

Wisdom, like virtue, comes easy from a distance. From far-off England Wedderburn gave what appears in retrospect to have been the most sensible advice: 'Personally I should not object to Mr. Lajpat Rai becoming President—it might make him realise his responsibilities. ... My own idea would be to let Messrs. Tilak and Co. have a trial in the management and honours of the Congress, but instead of withdrawing, the more careful people should rally their forces and exercise a beneficial control on the Congress meeting.'[111] But the Moderate leaders of Bengal and Bombay feared that the election of Lajpat Rai or Tilak as president of the Congress would be a signal that the organization had been captured by the Extremists. In order to counteract it, therefore, they persuaded Dadabhai Naoroji to come over from England to preside over the 1906 session.[112] The *Indian Social Reformer,* 23 September 1906, referred contemptuously to 'the forecast of a Poona contemporary that the conversion of the Congress into a Tilak-Pal movement has only been postponed for a year by the nomination of Naoroji as President'.[113]

As the selection of the Congress president had in recent years aroused a good deal of criticism and controversy, the 'tentative' constitution adopted by the Calcutta Congress in 1906 clearly defined the procedure for this purpose: 'The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held should organize a Reception Committee in such manner as it deems proper for making arrangements for the Session, and the choice of the President should in the first instance rest with the Reception Committee, if, after, consulting other Provincial Congress Committees, the Reception Committee is able to make the choice by a majority of at least three-fourths of its members. If, however, no such majority can be obtained to support the nomination of any person, the question should be referred to the Central Standing Committee of the Congress, and the decision of this Committee should be final.'[114]

The controversy surrounding the choice of the president of the 1907 Congress has been dealt with in chapter five of this volume. Dr Rash Behari Ghose was a successful lawyer, a member of the imperial legislative council, and a respected citizen. He had also been chairman of the reception committee of the Calcutta Congress in 1906. But he was selected president of the 1907 Congress because of the desire of Moderate leaders to 'keep on our side a considerable body of Bengali delegates, who otherwise may work and vote with the new party in the Congress'.[115] His selection was disliked by a large number of Congressmen and contributed not a little to the split at Surat in December 1907.

The constitution adopted by the Congress in April 1908 contained the following provision regarding the election of the Congress president: 'Article XXIII (a). In the month of June, the Reception Committee shall consult the several Provincial Congress Committees as to the selection of the President of the year's Congress. The Provincial Congress Committees shall make their recommendations by the end of July; and in the month of August the Reception Committee shall meet to consider the recommendations. If the person recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is accepted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the President of the next Congress. If, however, the Reception Committee is unable to elect the President in the manner mentioned above, the matter shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee, whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In either case, the election shall be final.

'(b) There shall be no formal *election* of the President by or in the Congress, but merely the adoption (in accordance with the provision in that behalf laid down in Rule 3, clause (b) of the Rules hereto appended) of a formal Resolution requesting the President, already elected in the manner hereinabove laid down, to take the chair.'[116]

But once the prominent central and local leaders of the Congress agreed on a particular name, the procedure for selection became a mere formality.

Gokhale, who had favoured the choice of Rash Behari Ghose as president in 1907 on the ground that it would help to keep a large number of Bengali delegates on the Moderate side, wanted Mehta, 'the foremost constitutionalist' of his time in India, to be elected president of the 1908 Congress because it was going to discuss the Morley-Minto reform proposals.[117] But the reason which he had advanced in 1907 continued to remain operative in 1908 and resulted in the selection of Ghose as president of the Madras Congress. Wacha wrote to Gokhale on 9 October 1908 that 'it would alienate Bengal if we chose Mehta. Bengal is in sulks. It does not care even for the reforms. It is childish. But at the present we cannot afford to displease one arm of the Congress. ... Bengal like Bombay has a status and influence at the Congress which cannot be denied.'[118]

Mehta was duly elected president of the 1909 Congress scheduled to be held at Lahore and he at first accepted the honour. But a couple of weeks before the Congress was to meet, he changed his mind and resigned the nomination, probably because he was annoyed at the threat of some prominent Bengal Moderates to stay away from the session and also feared that the meeting would be poorly attended. The A.I.C.C. then chose M.M. Malaviya to be president of the Lahore Congress. Formally moving the proposal that Malaviya 'do take the chair', S.N. Banerjea remarked: 'Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has been one of the earliest and one of the most devoted workers in the Congress cause. My memory goes back to the events of 1886 when my young friend ... having just left the College ... for the first time spoke at a meeting of the Calcutta Congress. He was so young that he had to be lifted up on a chair in order that the audience might have an opportunity of having a look at him. He had a fascinating appearance, which he has even now, but the audience was more charmed by the eloquence of the youthful orator than by his good looks, and that speech—one of the very best that I have ever heard—made a deep impression upon the minds of the Congress gathering and pointed him out as one of the future leaders of the Congress movement. The promise of 1886 has now been abundantly fulfilled and today Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya stands forth as one of the great buttresses of the Congress movement. Sober and moderate in his views, temperate and eloquent in their expression, he has been rightly declared the silver-tongued orator of the Congress and he is fully entitled to the honour which has been conferred on him by the All-India Congress Committee ... .'[119]

Because of all sorts of divisions and discords prevailing in the Congress and the country at the time, the Lahore Congress of 1909 'was the poorest gathering on record'.[120] Gokhale pleaded with Sir William Wedderburn that he should come out to India in order to preside over the Allahabad Congress of 1910. He was anxious to use his presence and influence in order 'to heal, if possible, the unfortunate and somewhat acute differences that at present divide us'.[121] Despite his age and ill health and the 'veto' of his wife and doctor, Wedderburn nobly responded to the call of Gokhale and India, and came and presided over the Congress for the second time—the only Briton who had this unique distinction. Though the procedure laid down by the 1908 constitution was duly followed in electing Wedderburn as president of the Allahabad Congress in 1910, it was in this case, as Gokhale had already assured him, 'the merest formality'.[122]

The Calcutta Congress of 1911 was to have been presided over by Ramsay MacDonald, the British Labour leader, who had already shown a keen and sympathetic interest in India, visited the country in 1909 and the year after published a book entitled *The Awakening of India.* But his wife was taken seriously ill and he had to cancel the engagement in the autumn.[123] The Moderate leaders of Bengal then expressed a desire to have M.K. Gandhi as president of the forthcoming Congress. While in Calcutta in September 1911 B.N. Basu and Gokhale 'talked about the desirability of electing Gandhi and ... both agreed that in view of his proscribed pamphlet on Indian Home Rule, his name had better not be brought forward'.[124] But other Bengali leaders insisted and Gokhale's advice was once again sought in the matter. Gokhale had the highest regard for Gandhi and he believed 'that no honour we can possibly do Gandhi is too great and I should be prepared to bear a good deal of unpleasant criticism, if it has to be incurred in honouring him', but he 'doubted if Gandhi would be able to come and also if he still believed in the Congress programme'.[125] The telegram which the Bengal Congress committee sent to Gandhi asking him if he would be able to accept the nomination was so vaguely worded

that the latter thought that it was a definite offer and wired back his acceptance. Reuter even flashed the news. Unfortunately, the confusion was further confounded when a majority of the provincial Congress committees preferred R.N. Mudholkar to Gandhi. Gokhale tried to save the situation and persuaded Gandhi to withdraw his name. But Bengal did not like Mudholkar and changed its preference in favour of Sir Henry Cotton. Cotton, though, was disliked by many Moderate leaders because of his erratic behaviour and hob-nobbing with the Extremists.[126] The matter was referred to the A.I.C.C., which met at Allahabad in late October 1911. In order to counter Bengal's move for Cotton, the Bombay Moderates first proposed the names of Mudholkar and D.A. Khare, but, as there was unlikely to be a majority in the A.I.C.C. for either of these two candidates, they combined with their allies in the U.P. to get B.N. Dar elected president of the Calcutta Congress of 1911. This gave great offence to the Bengal Moderate leaders.[127]

The annulment of the partition of their province, announced shortly before the Congress assembled at Calcutta on 26 December 1911, made the Bengalis so happy that they forgot the offence and reconciled themselves to the virtual imposition of B.N. Dar as president. Proposing the confirmation of the election of Dar as president on the opening day of the Congress, S.N. Banerjea said: 'Ladies and gentlemen, Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar may not perhaps be so well known in Bengal. That is our misfortune and not his fault. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar is an eminent writer and thinker on Indian political questions. ... His name is pre-eminently associated with the public life of the United Provinces, and from the earliest days of the Congress movement he has been an earnest, staunch and devoted worker of the Congress cause distinguished by his courageous independence and the moderation and sobriety of his views.'[128] Seconding the motion, Mudholkar referred to Dar's speeches and writings on the Congress in the late 1880s and added that 'if in later years his name has not been heard of, it is only due to misfortune which all of us are sorry for. He was stricken down with serious ailment rendering him utterly unable to take part in political life for which he is so well fitted.'[129] Supporting the resolution, Gokhale observed: 'During the last few years unfortunately illness had compelled him to live in comparative retirement. But even in that retirement, especially during those days of storm and stress from which we have recently passed, he has been a source of great strength to the cause of constitutional progress in the United Provinces.'[130]

The newly-created province of Bihar was extremely keen that the first Congress to be held there should be presided over by Gokhale, if not by a British M.P., but the majority of the provincial Congress committees, obviously inspired by the central Moderate leadership, favoured R.N. Mudholkar to be the president of the 1912 Congress at Bankipur. The local reception committee refused to accept the election of Mudholkar and insisted on the matter being reopened and referred to the A.I.C.C. The reference to the A.I.C.C. was intended by the framers of the Congress constitution of 1908 to be the exception and not the rule. Unfortunately, in 1909 and again in 1911 the A.I.C.C. had to intervene and decide the question of the Congress presidency. Wacha, one of the two general secretaries of the Congress, was therefore provoked into writing an angry letter to the secretary of the Bankipur Congress committee in which he said: 'In the first place you will allow me to state that we are yet uninformed of that "peculiar condition" of your province which has prompted your Reception Committee to say that it would prefer Mr. Gokhale to Mr. Mudholkar as President of the coming Congress. But be that peculiar condition what it may, we really think that your Committee was far from prudent when it rejected the deliberate opinion of the different

provincial Committees which was invited. Had it been the case that it was only a minority of those Committees which had recommended a particular name it might have been different. But it was wrong and far from prudent and dignified to have set aside the recommendation of the majority and endeavour to force on the coming Congress another name of its own choice. The intention of the authors of the constitution originally framed was certainly to give the country a paramount voice in the choice of a President. It cannot be that in a matter affecting the whole country a particular province or organisation can dictate one at its own pleasure. But this is exactly what your Committee has most imprudently done, heedless of the consequences of such an act. Of what use is eliciting the opinion of all provincial Committees if those opinions, when received, are to be set aside? The mode deliberately described under the constitution becomes a solemn farce and every reception committee can with impunity take advantage of the other provision [of reference to the A.I.C.C.], which is more as a safeguard under certain difficulties than aught else. As a rule, for any reception committee to act in the manner your own has done, would be subversive of all constitutional procedure, besides endangering the very existence of the Congress—a calamity to be devoutly avoided under present conditions. So that to me it is a matter of regret, as it has been to a very large number of Congressmen in all parts of the country, the conduct and action of your Committee. It was the very opposite of what experience, prudence and the existing circumstances of the Congress should have dictated. The fact informs me that you could not have on your Committee Congressmen of experience, caution and foresight, otherwise it would have been impossible to make an appeal to the All-India Congress Committee. ... It is still to be wished that your Committee will retrace its step and abide by the decisive voice of the majority of the Provincial Congress Committees. But it is to be feared many of its members are inexperienced and are not quite conversant with Congressional matters in the past. Enthusiasm is all right but it has, in grave matters of the Congress, to be tempered by discretion and wise judgement.'[131]

Not unnaturally, Wacha's reprimanding letter gave great offence to Bihari Congressmen and led to a prolonged and bitter controversy which did little credit to either side. But, finally, the authority of the Congress constitution and the will of the central leadership prevailed. Bihar had to make do with Mudholkar as president of its first Congress, more so because Gokhale himself declined the honour and supported the election of Mudholkar. Moving the formal resolution for Mudholkar's election as president of the Bankipur Congress, S.N. Banerjea described him as 'a veteran Congress leader', 'a keen social reformer and ardent worker in the field of industrial activity', and praised him for his 'sobriety and moderation'.[132] Gokhale, who supported the motion, remarked: 'No man amongst us ... has done more in his Province for the Congress than what Mr. Mudholkar has done in the Province of Berar. ... he has freely placed his talents, his energy, his enthusiasm and his purse at the disposal of the Congress during a quarter of a century ... I rejoice personally and I am sure we all rejoice that the honour of presiding over this Congress, the highest honour in the gift of this country, has at last come to our friend ... Many of us feel that this honour has long been overdue to him ... several times in the past, his name has been before the country in connection with the Presidentship of the Congress; and yet he has been passed over, sometimes passed over so markedly as to hurt even a man smaller than Mr. Mudholkar, someone less devoted to the Congress than Mr. Mudholkar. I am sure that we all admire the dignity with which he has borne himself when such occasions arose.'[133]

In mid-1907 P.M. Mehta had suggested that as an overdue gesture to south India and to the Muslim community, Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur, a prominent businessman and politician of Madras who had been connected with the Congress since 1887, should be elected president of the next Congress scheduled to be held at Nagpur.[134] But in the difficult situation then prevailing, men like Gokhale and V.K. Iyer felt that the Nawab would not do and they instead favoured the election of Rash Behari Ghose.[135] If the Congress had not broken up at Surat, it would most probably have been invited to meet at Karachi in 1908 and Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur would have been its president.[136] The decision of Sindh Congressmen remained unchanged and when at long last the Congress came to Karachi in 1913, they unanimously desired the Nawab to preside over it.[137] The fast growing *rapprochement* between the Congress and the Muslim League only served to reinforce their desire and underline its wisdom, for the Nawab was a member of both organizations. The hopes entertained of Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur were not disappointed and under his guidance the Karachi Congress passed a formal resolution which expressed 'its warm appreciation of the adoption by the All-India Moslem League of the ideal of Self-Government for India within the British Empire' and endorsed the League's plea for harmonious co-operation between the two communities.[138]

For the presidency of the 1914 Congress at Madras five provincial Congress committees favoured Lajpat Rai while only four favoured B.N. Basu. With the Congress becoming increasingly friendly with both the Muslim League and the British government, the Moderate managers of the Congress did not want Lajpat Rai to become president of the next Congress, because he was *persona non grata* to both Aligarh and Simla. As G.S. Iyer put it, Lajpat Rai 'is certainly a more severe type of a patriot and in his composition there is less of a statesman than of the patriot', whereas B.N. Basu 'has more of the statesman than of the patriot'. He went on to say: 'At such a juncture, it may not be quite expedient to offer the most valued national gift of the Congress presidency to one who, though of unimpeachable character, of great ability and of distinguished public service, yet does not command the same complete confidence and regard of the Mahommedan as of the Hindu community.'[139] Even the argument that Lajpat Rai 'comes from a province which has so far been left in the cold shade of neglect when the election of Congress President was made year after year',[140] did not weigh with the Moderate caucus and they used their backstairs influence to secure a majority for Basu by persuading a couple of provincial Congress committees to change their preference. Though done with the best of motives, it was a mean trick which made the Moderate caucus extremely unpopular with a large section of their own Hindu followers.[141] At the Madras Congress on 28 December 1914, those who proposed and supported Basu's election as president were at pains to emphasize the work he had done in England and the esteem in which he was held by Britons, both official and non-official.[142]

Despite the rapid growth of the Home Rule movement in the country during 1915-16, the provincial Congress committees continued to be dominated by the Moderates and they did not find it very difficult to get their own nominees elected as presidents of the Congress at Bombay in 1915 and at Lucknow in 1916. Both S.P. Sinha, who presided over the former, and A.C. Mazumdar, who presided over the latter, were lawyers and Moderates who were unlikely to give any offence to either the Muslims or the British. Sinha had had very little to do with the Congress in the past, but Mazumdar was a veteran Congressman. The choice of three Bengalis in quick succession as presidents of the Congress (1914: Basu; 1915: Sinha; 1916: Mazumdar) was no accident. The Bombay Moderates were apparently following the tactics which had been

devised as early as 1907 of keeping Bengali Congressmen in good humour and divided in order to be able to meet the Extremist challenge both within and without the Congress. The tactics failed in 1917 when the Congress met in Calcutta and a Bengali could not be elected president. Moreover, by 1917 the Extremists had infiltrated the Congress organization in many provinces and considerably undermined, if not destroyed, the Moderate dominance of the Congress committees. The dissensions in the Calcutta reception committee during 1917 before the election of Mrs Besant as president of the Congress far surpassed those witnessed at Nagpur in 1907. Mrs Besant's own qualities and services to India justified her election to the presidency of the Congress. The British government's folly in interning her enormously increased her popularity. In electing Mrs Besant as president of the Calcutta Congress in 1917, the Congress not only honoured her for having served and suffered for India, but also used her—a British lady—to defy the waning might of both the Raj and the Moderates. Nineteen hundred and seven, when the Moderates had resisted the election of Tilak or Lajpat Rai as president of the Congress, because they had been imprisoned for political activities and were not liked by the British government, was avenged in 1917.

The president of the special session of the Congress held at Bombay from 29 August to 1 September 1918 was Hasan Imam, a Bihari Muslim, a retired judge of the Calcutta high court, and brother of the well-known Muslim League leader, Ali Imam. His choice as president of the Congress was due not so much to his alleged qualities of the head and the heart, as to the desire to preserve and promote unity between the Congress and the Muslim League. As Mrs Besant said while requesting him to take the presidential chair: '... here in this critical moment of India's destiny the National Congress is electing a Mussalman brother as its President in order that Great Britain may understand that the *entente* is a real union, that it is growing stronger, not weaker, as the years pass by, and that before long we shall not know in politics the name of Mussalman and Hindu but the one name of the citizen of India'.[143] Similarly, M.M. Malaviya was elected to preside over the Delhi Congress in December 1918 because he was, to quote Mrs Besant again, 'the symbol of Indian unity among diversity of opinions'.[144]

Between 1885 and 1918 the Congress held thirty-four regular sessions and one special session. The details of the places where the sessions were held and their presidents are given below:

1885	Bombay	W.C. Bonnerjee
1886	Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji
1887	Madras	Badruddin Tyabji
1888	Allahabad	George Yule
1889	Bombay	W. Wedderburn
1890	Calcutta	P.M. Mehta
1891	Nagpur	P. Ananda Charlu
1892	Allahabad	W.C. Bonnerjee
1893	Lahore	Dadabhai Naoroji
1894	Madras	Alfred Webb
1895	Poona	S.N. Banerjea
1896	Calcutta	R.M. Sayani
1897	Amraoti	C. Sankaran Nair
1898	Madras	A.M. Bose
1899	Lucknow	R.C. Dutt

1900	Lahore	N.G. Chandavarkar
1901	Calcutta	D.E. Wacha
1902	Ahmedabad	S.N. Banerjea
1903	Madras	L.M. Ghose
1904	Bombay	H.J.S. Cotton
1905	Banaras	G.K. Gokhale
1906	Calcutta	Dadabhai Naoroji
1907	Surat	R.B. Ghose
1908	Madras	R.B. Ghose
1909	Lahore	M.M. Malaviya
1910	Allahabad	W. Wedderburn
1911	Calcutta	B.N. Dar
1912	Bankipur	R.N. Mudholkar
1913	Karachi	Syed Mahomed
1914	Madras	B.N. Basu
1915	Bombay	S.P. Sinha
1916	Lucknow	A.C. Mazumdar
1917	Calcutta	Annie Besant
August 1918 (Special Session)	Bombay	Hasan Imam
1918	Delhi	M.M. Malaviya

Of the thirty-five sessions of the Congress between 1885-1918, no less than six were presided over by Britons (1888, Allahabad: G. Yule; 1889, Bombay: W. Wedderburn; 1894, Madras: A. Webb; 1904, Bombay: H. Cotton; 1910, Allahabad: W. Wedderburn; 1917, Calcutta: A. Besant). The Congress deliberately chose Britons as presidents in order to prove its loyal and non-racial character, to win the sympathy and support of certain sections of British politicians, to express its gratitude to those Britons who had helped it, and to attract a larger number of delegates and visitors to the Congress than usual.

George Yule, ex-president of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, was the first Briton to preside over the Indian National Congress. When in September 1888 Hume sounded the standing Congress committees about his presiding over the forthcoming Allahabad session, the Bombay committee, led by Pherozeshah Mehta, doubted the wisdom of the move. Mehta believed that it was 'yet premature both to admit Europeans and to ask a European to preside. Our President for some years yet to come must be a Native. ... We can't depend on Europeans. Once admitted they might sometimes go against us and mar our aims and objects.'[145] Hume's idea was to enlist not only the support of the more enlightened and liberally-inclined Anglo-Indians, but also of the powerful chambers of commerce in the country for the Congress programme of reform, particularly that relating to the liberalization of the legislative councils.[146] Bombay was not convinced, but it refrained from pressing its objection in the interests of unity.[147] The choice of Yule as president apparently proved to be a great success.

For the next Congress in Bombay in 1889 also Hume first tried to get Forbes Adam, president of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce.[148] Only when he declined was Sir William Wedderburn selected to preside.[149] However, when in 1890 it was again proposed to have a European as president, and first Herbert Gladstone and then a Madras-based barrister, W.S. Gantz, were sounded, there were mutterings of discontent, particularly from Bombay. Wacha

wrote to Naoroji on 8 July 1890: 'Here we think that an Indian gentleman ought to preside at the coming Congress. The offering of the Chairmanship every time to Europeans is deprecated. It shows our weakness—the paucity of our able men to preside at the Congress. My own opinion is that Pherozeshah Mehta ought to be the President... .'[150] Naoroji wrote back on 29 August 1890: 'The more you can get Europeans of influence on your side as Presidents taking active part, the less will be the cry that your object was revolutionary. Still it would be desirable to have interspersion of Indian Presidents.'[151] When Herbert Gladstone pleaded inability to accept the invitation because of prior engagements[152] and it seemed almost certain that Gantz would be president,[153] there was a revulsion of feeling in Congress circles.[154] As Wacha wrote to Naoroji on 12 December 1890: '... there has been a rift in the lute. The nomination of Gantz has not met with approval in certain Congress centres. My information is that Madras itself has rebelled; that he has very few adherents in that city. ... The house is divided, that is a fact. So the Reception Committee [of the Calcutta Congress] had no alternative but to offer the Presidentship to Pherozeshah M. Mehta.'[155]

In 1894, the reception committee of the Madras Congress wanted a Member of Parliament to be president.[156] At its insistence, the British Committee in London, approached successively Edward Blake, Michael Davitt, John Dillon, and Alfred Webb—all members of the Irish Parliamentary Party.[157] Ultimately, Webb was selected. The selection of Webb, who had no previous connexion with India, was not liked by W.C. Bonnerjee, one of the most prominent members of the British Committee and probably the most influential Congress leader of his time. He stayed away from the 1894 Congress, because, as he said later: 'I was altogether opposed to an Englishman who had never resided in India or been out there as a merchant or in some other capacity presiding at the Congress and ... if I had been there I should have felt it my duty to oppose his [Webb's] election.'[158] Bonnerjee succeeded in making the British Committee formally decide in 1897 'that the President of the Congress should either be a native of India, or some other person who had spent much time in the country and enjoyed the confidence of the people'.[159]

Badly divided over the question of holding the social conference in the Congress pavilion, the Poona reception committee thought of inviting John Morley to preside over the 1895 Congress,[160] but the idea does not appear to have been seriously pursued. Wacha wrote to Naoroji on 30 August 1895: 'It is ... much to be deprecated this desire on the part of the Congress to get every time a Britisher to preside ... we should not annually indulge in the luxury of a British President as if all ability in the country were exhausted.'[161] It was not simply a question of indigenous ability being available, but of its being generally acceptable. As the *Indian Social Reformer* wrote a few years later, 'the list of Indian gentlemen whose selection would carry general assent does not seem to be a very large one'.[162]

As the Amraoti Congress in 1897 was going to meet under extremely adverse circumstances—under the shadow of plague and famine, the Poona murders, the prosecution of Tilak, and Congressmen being openly accused of sedition by Anglo-Indians—it was felt 'that an Englishman of sympathy at this juncture may be a better man to preside'.[163] The local reception committee sought the assistance of the British Committee for getting a Member of Parliament to preside.[164] The names of Edward Blake and Atherley-Jones were suggested.[165] But the British Committee reiterated its earlier decision and Amraoti had to make do with Sankaran Nair.[166] On the successful conclusion of the 1897 Congress, Naoroji congratulated R.N. Mudholkar saying: '... you all should have greater pride that you have helped yourself without the extraneous prop of an M.P. from here or any Englishman.'[167]

When in 1898 the Madras reception committee approached the British Committee to get a British M.P. to preside over the forthcoming Congress, Naoroji wrote back on 29 July 1898: 'We must show that we can help ourselves and do not need to lean upon others. We must give up the idea of having Englishmen as our Presidents. We must have Indians as Presidents. ... We must seek our promising young men and, though they may not be much known, the very fact of becoming a President adds one to the list of men of position and influence.'[168] Madras had to rest satisfied with A.M. Bose.

In 1899 Lucknow, too, holding a Congress session for the first time, wanted a British M.P. as president, but the general secretary, Wacha, told, Ganga Prasad Varma, the chief organizer, that '[Naoroji], Sir William Wedderburn and Hume ... all disapprove of this'.[169] The Lucknow reception committee toyed for some time with the idea of having Eardley Norton,[170] a Madras-based barrister, as president, but ultimately settled for R.C. Dutt.

Sir William Wedderburn was invited to preside over the Congress session at Lahore in 1900, and again over that at Ahmedabad in 1902, but, thinking that his visit to India would serve no useful purpose so long as Curzon was viceroy, he declined.[171]

On 16 May 1903 Wacha complained to Naoroji that 'the Madrasis have set their heart upon getting an Englishman or Britisher to preside. But this is a mistake. And though we have more than once informed them of the opinion your [British] Committee holds on the subject, they are needlessly panting for such a President.'[172] Again, a week later he wrote: 'Our Madras friends seem to have a hobby to get an Englishman to preside. It is not a correct sentiment in my opinion.'[173] The Madras reception committee tried unsuccessfully to get Sir Henry Cotton, H.W. Paul, W.T. Stead, and Frederic Harrison.[174] Ultimately, it had to make do for the second time in succession with a Bengali, namely L.M. Ghose.

Bombay, which never tired of lecturing the other centres on the desirability of making use of indigenous talent, itself invited Cotton to preside over the 1904 session of the Congress held there.[175]

In 1910 Sir William Wedderburn was persuaded to preside over the Congress, at Allahabad, for the second time in the vain hope that he could help in ending the growing feud between the Moderates and the Extremists, and between the Hindus and the Muslims.[176]

In an apparent attempt to woo the British Labour Party, Ramsay MacDonald was nominated president of the 1911 session of the Congress to be held at Calcutta. When MacDonald was prevented from coming by the illness of his wife, Calcutta showed a marked preference for Cotton. It felt extremely unhappy at being finally compelled to accept B.N. Dar.[177]

Holding its first ever Congress session in 1912 at Bankipur, the new-born province of Bihar wanted a British M.P. to preside over it in order 'to arouse enthusiasm'.[178] Ramsay MacDonald was once again sounded, but he declined saying that he could not leave England that year.[179] It was most reluctantly that the reception committee of the Bankipur Congress acquiesced in the nomination of R.N. Mudholkar.

For the presidentship of the 1914 Congress session at Madras Mrs Besant suggested the name of Lord Ampthill, at one time governor of Madras and acting governor-general of India,[180] but the suggestion was not taken seriously.

From 1915 onwards Mrs Besant regularly offered herself as a candidate for the presidentship of the Congress.[181] Though popular in certain circles, she was extremely suspect in the eyes of others. It was not until she was interned by the Madras government in 1917 and

invested with the halo of martyrdom that she managed to become president of the Congress at Calcutta in 1917. She was the last British president of the Congress, and the Calcutta session over which she presided was the last session of the united Congress, still at least nominally controlled by the Moderates.

Of the twenty-nine Indian presidents of the Congress between 1885-1918, twelve came from Bengal (1885, Bombay: W.C. Bonnerjee; 1892, Allahabad: W.C. Bonnerjee; 1895, Poona: S.N. Banerjea; 1898, Madras: A.M. Bose; 1899, Lucknow: R.C. Dutt; 1902, Ahmedabad: S.N. Banerjea; 1903, Madras: L.M. Ghose; 1907, Surat: R.B. Ghose; 1908, Madras: R.B. Ghose, 1914, Madras: B.N. Basu; 1915, Bombay: S.P. Sinha; 1916, Lucknow: A.C. Mazumdar), nine from Bombay (1886, Calcutta: D. Naoroji; 1887, Madras: B. Tyabji; 1890, Calcutta; P.M. Mehta; 1893, Lahore: D. Naoroji; 1896, Calcutta: R.M. Sayani; 1900, Lahore: N.G. Chandavarkar; 1901, Calcutta: D.E. Wacha; 1905, Banaras: G.K. Gokhale; 1906, Calcutta: D. Naoroji), three each from Madras (1891, Nagpur: A. Charlu; 1897, Amraoti: C.S. Nair; 1913, Karachi: S. Mahomed) and the United Provinces (1909, Lahore: M.M. Malaviya; 1911, Calcutta: B.N. Dar; 1918, Delhi: M.M. Malaviya), and one each from C.P. and Berar (1912, Bankipur: R.N. Mudholkar) and Bihar (August 1918 special session, Bombay: H. Imam). Panjab alone of the then existing provinces did not have the honour of providing a president to the Congress in the thirty-four long years between 1885 and 1918. Dadabhai Naoroji presided over three sessions of the Congress; while W.C. Bonnerjee, S.N. Banerjea, R.B. Ghose, M.M. Malaviya, and W. Wedderburn presided over two sessions of the Congress each. While choosing its Indian presidents the Congress—so long as it was controlled by the Moderates—took care to exclude those who were known to be pronouncedly anti-British, whatever their popularity in the country, but it never chose a toady or a rich man—landlord or merchant—simply because he gave money to the Congress. Attempts were also made, albeit unsuccessfully, to ensure that the presidentship rotated amongst all the communities and provinces of India. The qualities required of an Indian president were a good English education, eloquence, high social status, adherence to the Congress ideals of liberal nationalism, and distinction in public life.

Until 1917, when Mrs Besant asserted her right to function, as she was clearly entitled to do, as president all through the year, the Congress president remained in office only during the three or four days of the annual session. His address to the meeting was the principal event of the session. He controlled the proceedings and also acted as chairman of the various committees appointed to discuss questions and report to the main body. As S.N. Banerjea remarked in 1895: 'Your President is not only your speaker; he is something more. It is his duty to maintain order, to regulate your proceedings and to facilitate the despatch of your business. Having regard to the magnitude of this assembly, this in itself would make a heavy demand upon the resources, physical and mental, of the strongest and the ablest among us. But your President has other duties imposed upon him. During the three days that the Congress is in session he is your spokesman, your organ, the right arm of your strength. He voices forth the spirit which animates you in your deliberations, the temper which guides you in the solemn and arduous task which lies before you.'[182]

The main responsibility of making the arrangements for holding the annual session of the Congress fell on the local reception committee. About the first Congress proposed to be held in Poona in late December 1885, the circular issued in March 1885 had said: 'This year the

Conference being in Poona, Mr. [S.H.] Chiplonkar and others of the Sarvajanik Sabha have consented to form a Reception Committee, in whose hands will rest the whole of the local arrangements. The Peshwah's Garden near the Parbati Hill will be utilized both as a place of meeting (it contains a fine Hall, like the garden, the property of the Sabha) and as a residence for the delegates, each of whom will be there provided with suitable quarters. Much importance is attached to this since when all thus reside *together* for a week, far greater opportunities for friendly intercourse will be afforded than if the delegates were (as at the time of the late Bombay [Ripon] demonstration) scattered about in dozens of private lodging houses all over the town. Delegates are expected to find their own way to and from Poona—but from the time they reach the Poona Railway Station until they again leave it, everything that they can need, carriage, accommodation, food, etc., will be provided for them gratuitously. The cost thus involved will be defrayed from the Reception Fund, which the Poona Association most liberally offers to provide in the first instance, but to which all delegates, whose means warrant their incurring this further expense, will be at liberty to contribute any sum they please. Any unutilized balance of such donations will be carried forward as a nucleus for next year's Reception fund.'[183]

About the reception committee of the second Congress, held at Calcutta in 1886, the following information is available: 'Early in September [1886] a Committee to arrange for the reception and entertainment of the 250 delegates expected from Northern, Western and Southern India, was established at Calcutta under the presidency of Sir Jotendro Mohun Tagore. It is an understanding that, while delegates from any part of the province in which a Congress may be held, make their own arrangements for their sojourn thereat, the delegates from other provinces shall be, during the Congress, the guests of the province where the assemblage is held. A good deal of money had therefore to be raised, the Maharajahs of Cooch Behar, Durbhanga, Hutwa and Dumraon, Sir Jotendro Mohun Tagore and other leading gentlemen of the British Indian Association, the Venerable Debendro Nath Tagore and many other distinguished members of our community heading the list with great liberality, and several large houses (Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee and Baboo Hem Chunder Gossain giving up their fine houses amongst others for the purpose) had to be secured for the accommodation of the expected delegates. [All the houses so occupied were in Park Street and close to one another.] The work of receiving and entertaining so large a body of guests belonging to so many different castes and creeds was necessarily very arduous. Many helped in one way or another, or success would have been impossible, but the bulk of the actual labour practically devolved on three gentlemen, Messrs. J. Ghosal, Girija Bhusan Mookerjee, and Kumud Chunder Mookerjee, whose unwearying assiduity and thoughtful kindness have been gracefully and gratefully acknowledged by all our visitors.'[184]

The leaders of the Congress were anxious that its third session at Madras in 1887 'should be more systematically organized, and its arrangements still more methodically conducted than those of its Calcutta predecessor. Accordingly, on the 1st of May, 1887, a great public meeting was held at Madras, and a very strong Reception Committee was formed, consisting of some 120 members, with Rajah Sir T. Madava Row, K.C.S.I., as Chairman, and including the Honourable Mir Humayun Jah Bahadur, C.I.E., Sir Savalai Ramaswami Mudeliar, C.I.E., the Honourable S. Subramania Iyer, the Honourable Rajah T. Rama Row, the Honourable P. Chentsal Row Pantulu, C.I.E., Messrs. P. Somasundaram Chettiar, Rungiah Nayudu, G. Mahadeva Chettiar, N. Subramaniem, Thavasi Moothoo Nadar, B. Lovery, B.H. Chester, Khan

Bahadur Hajee Mahomed Abdulla Badshah Sahib, Mahomed Nizamudeen Khan Bahadur, the Honourable Rajah G.N. Gajapathi Row, Mr. P. Ananda Charlu, Dr. S. Pulney Andy, etc., etc., in fact, with few exceptions, all the leading men, Eurasians, Mahomedans, Native Christians, Hindus (both Brahmins and other castes) of the Madras Presidency. Out of this Committee, again, an Executive Committee of about twenty-five members was constituted and the work commenced. Arrangements were made for sub-committees in every town of 10,000 inhabitants and upwards in the Presidency. ... First, they decided that every portion of their own Presidency, at any rate, and every class and creed and community that it contained, should be thoroughly represented. ... Then, they took the collection of funds in hand. ... Having thus in their own case provided alike for the men and the money, the Reception Committee proceeded to stir up the Standing Congress Committees, all over the country, to set on foot the necessary elections in their several jurisdictions and to ascertain and communicate to them the subjects that their people desired to be brought forward at the coming Congress. A long list of subjects was thus collected and compiled, and, then, through the several committees, and through the medium of the native newspapers, circulated, about the middle of November, in the several Provinces. ... At the previous Congress the want of a sufficiently large and suitable meeting Hall had been much felt, and the Congress had to shift its quarters from the Town Hall to the rooms of the British Indian Association and back again, involving ... the involuntary exclusion of the Press reporters—and, as Madras had no Hall, in which speakers could be heard, capable of accommodating, say 1,500 persons besides the delegates, it was decided to erect a temporary Hall. This was nothing but a huge shed or "Pandal", as it is locally called, 130 feet long by 92 feet wide, and open at the sides, but nicely lined with mats and coloured cloth, the interior when closely packed, as it was throughout the session, with delegates and spectators, constituted a sight that none there will ever forget, and it moreover developed acoustic properties that were simply marvellous.'[185]

The local authorities made a clumsy attempt to deny the reception committee of the Allahabad Congress in 1888 a suitable site. But the chairman of the reception committee, Pandit Ajudhianath, proved more than equal to the task and 'by a *tour de force'* secured the grounds of Lowther Castle, lying alongside Government House and overlooking the Alfred Park, just seven weeks before the Congress was to be held. 'Thus, at last, the Congress Dove found rest for the soles of her feet ... A site once obtained, the grounds of Lowther Castle were rapidly levelled and studded with rows of tents, divided off into blocks by broad roads, such as to preclude the possibility of any accidental fires spreading. Dining and meeting hall for each block were created, a splendid hall, beautifully decorated interiorly, 150 by 100 feet in length and breadth, capable of accommodating with its galleries 5,000 persons, was erected for the sittings of the Congress, and midway between this and Lowther Castle, where the President, Secretaries and some of the leading delegates and the offices were located, a magnificent *shamianah,* some 100 feet square, kindly lent by His Highness the Maharajah of Durbhunga, was pitched and furnished as a drawing-room, to serve as a general reception room for all delegates and visitors. Another beautiful *shamianah,* lent by a Mahomedan nobleman, was fitted up as a reading-room, and for some days before, during, and some days after the Congress, the tables were supplied with copies of almost every newspaper published in India (except, of course, of some eight or ten Anglo-Indian journals), furnished gratuitously, in token of their goodwill and sympathy, by their editors and managers. In one part of the grounds rows of shops were constructed, constituting a bazaar, in which delegates could obtain every article

they could possibly require, from jewellery to fruit, and kin-khabs to flour and lentils; only spirituous liquors and intoxicants of all kinds were rigidly excluded from the premises—the Congress, though primarily a political body, having also strong temperance and social reform proclivities. Indeed the Congress gatherings were taken advantage of, to hold in the evenings, and, again, on the day immediately following the close of the Congress, large meetings, at which numerous questions of social and moral reform were discussed, and plans of operation during the coming year in each of the innumerable sections into which in social matters, the community is divided by creed, caste, and race, were considered and, in many cases, settled. Of course all this, and the provision of furniture, lights, and food for the delegates during their stay, sanitary arrangements, watch and ward, and fire protection, involved considerable expenditure, and probably when all is settled the Reception Committee's account will not fall short of Rs. 45,000. Of this the fees of the delegates furnished about one-fourth, and the rest was raised by subscriptions throughout the Allahabad circle, supplemented by liberal donations from the Benares and Oudh circles.'[186]

The *Indian Mirror,* whose editor, N.N. Sen, was himself a delegate to the Allahabad Congress of 1888, wrote on 6 January 1889: 'By the exertions of the Reception Committee at Allahabad, Lowther Castle was converted into a town in itself, provided with every necessary which the permanent inhabitant of such a town would require. Roads had been opened and lamp-posts put up within easy distances; shops of all kinds were to be found, displaying their wares, and washermen and barbers plied their busy trade. Bengali and Mahratta cooks had been engaged for Hindu delegates hailing from the different Provinces, and who conformed to the orthodox mode of living. Large *shamianas,* distinct for both Mahomedans and Hindus, had been put up, under which the delegates of the different faiths took their meals. Many of the Hindus of Upper India, who did not mess in common, had separate rations served out to them which they either had dressed by cooks they had brought with them, or they prepared their meals themselves. All the delegates, Hindu and Mahomedan, were provided with the articles of diet suited to their consumption. And so excellent were the arrangements for serving so many and such a variety of men, that we heard scarcely any complaint from anybody on this or, indeed, on any other score. The Bengali members of the Allahabad Reception Committee were deputed to look after the comforts of the Bengali delegates specially; the Hindustani members devoted all their attention to the delegates coming from the United Provinces and the Punjab, while the duty of looking after the Mahomedan delegates was performed by the Mahomedan members of the Reception Committee. ... The Committee were further strengthened for their arduous work by a solid band of a hundred and fifty students who had offered themselves as volunteers to look after the delegates ... It is to us a matter of much surprise how and where the Reception Committee could find such a large number of tents, *shamianas* and *pals.* The quarters of the delegates were very completely furnished, and if they took with them their own beddings, sheets and pillows, we can only say they brought superfluities, for the Committee had already provided all these. Innumerable hand-lamps had been provided, and the lighting arrangements were simply perfect. Those delegates, who have adopted the European mode of living, had their idiosyncracy in this respect anticipated, and an enterprising fire-worshipping hotel-keeper was catering for their tables. ... A medical dispensary had been opened out, and the health of the delegates was entrusted to the care of a Vaidya, a Hakim, and a Doctor. A branch Post Office was open for the special use of the delegates, but the Reception Committee had to pay for this convenience by making an extra allowance to the postal employees. ... The

leading spirits of the Reception Committee were Pandit Ajodhya Nath, Babu Charu Chunder Mitter, Rajah Rampal Singh, Babu Ram Churn, Banker, and his son, Babu Sham Churn. ... The pavilion or the Congress Hall itself was erected under Babu Ram Churn's supervision. It was on a magnificent scale and of noble proportions, worthy of the Fourth National Congress. It cost, we are told, Rs. 9,000. We doubt if the pavilion had been discarded to make room for a pucca, brick-built edifice, the latter would have been equally half as good. The decorations of the pavilion were all the work of a Bengali artist, an ex-pupil of the Calcutta School of Arts, Babu Sarat Chunder Mitter. The neatness and the taste of the decorations were the admiration of everybody.'[187]

Years later Rabindranath Tagore remarked that Indians were unwilling to forego the sweetness of human relationship even in their work and business and that at their political gatherings they were less impressed by the business done than by the hospitality received. 'So, also, with the Congress, that much of it which is truly national—its hospitality—has played an abiding part in the national regeneration, while its work ends with its three-day session and is heard of no more during the rest of the year.'[188]

The Introduction to the *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress,* held at Allahabad in 1888, says: 'The Reception Committee consists of all delegates to previous Congresses belonging to the circle in which the Congress is held, together with all the more influential and important residents of the neighbourhood co-opted by these delegates. The Committee, always very large, as soon as constituted, elects office-bearers and a moderate-sized executive council who carry out all the work.'[189] The Introduction to the *Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress,* held at Nagpur in 1891, contains the following description of the local reception committee: 'Shortly after the sixth Congress [at Calcutta in 1890], as soon as it had been settled that the seventh Congress should be held at Nagpur, conjointly by the Central Provinces and by Berar, public meetings were held, at which all the leading citizens of both provinces were elected into a Reception Committee. The committee estimated the cost and allotted five-eighths of this to the Central Provinces, three-eighths to Berar. Committees in each then distributed these amounts amongst the several districts and towns included in each province, and though of course each of these districts and towns was represented on the committee by one or more of its prominent inhabitants or townsmen, it is yet noteworthy that, with two exceptions, every place paid its quota cheerfully, and that, from first to last, there never was the smallest difficulty about funds. Then the Reception Committee proceeded to elect its chairman and create, out of itself, a small executive committee of its most active members for general supervision and a series of sub-committees, to look especially after the building, food, lighting and fire prevention, furniture, sanitation and medical arrangements. ... Rather more than three months before the Congress was to meet, the Reception Committee addressed the several Standing Congress Committees presiding over the twenty-nine, now thirty-three, circles, into which the country is divided for Congress purposes, requesting them to ascertain from those inhabitants of their several circles who were interested in such matters, the questions that they desired to be taken up at the coming Congress. Having fully considered the replies, and having set aside those in which only a few, apparently, of the circles were interested, the Reception Committee proceeded to frame a series of resolutions based on the local suggestions, and to circulate a large number of copies of these to the several Standing Committees for distribution throughout their circles.'[190]

The draft constitution of the Congress prepared in 1887, which was never actually adopted, contained the following provisions relating to the composition and functions of the reception committee:

'XII. The Standing Congress Committee of the jurisdiction in which the Congress is to be held shall no less than six months before the date fixed for the Congress, associate with itself all the leading inhabitants of the place where the Congress is to be held, who may be willing to take a part in the proceedings, and with them constitute itself a Reception Committee.

'XIII. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee (A) to notify to all the Standing Committees their appointment, and to invite them to proceed to call for delegates, and to send in before the appointed date the list of the subjects which the people of their jurisdiction desire should be discussed ... (B) to collect and provide the funds necessary for the entertainment of the delegates and other purposes essential to the holding of the Congress; to arrange for a suitable Meeting Hall; for the suitable lodgment of the delegates of other jurisdictions; for the food of the delegates during their stay, due regard being had to the customs, local or religious, of each, and generally to arrange for everything necessary for their convenience and comfort; and (C) to maintain a constant correspondence with all the Standing Congress Committees, and generally, so far as may be, assure themselves that the necessary work is duly proceeding in all jurisdictions.

'XIV. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee to obtain from the several Standing Committees the list of subjects [that the people of their several jurisdictions desire to see discussed] ... and after eliminating all subjects (if there be any such) of a clearly provincial character, or unsupported by definite resolutions intended to be proposed in regard to them, to compile the rest into one list ... and print and despatch the same by the 15th of November, in sufficient numbers, to the several Standing Committees to enable these to distribute to each delegate and provisional delegate ... .

'XV. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee, as soon as possible after its constitution, to select and communicate to the several Standing Congress Committees the names of those gentlemen whom it considers eligible for the office of President, and in correspondence with them to settle who shall be invited to fill that office, and thereafter when an agreement thereon has been come to, to communicate with the gentleman finally approved by all, or a considerable majority of the Standing Committees, and generally to do all that may be necessary to settle the question of the Presidentship at least one month before the Congress meets. ...

'XVII. It shall be the duty of the Chairman of the Reception Committee to preside at the commencement of the inaugural sitting of the Congress, and after delivering such address as he and the Reception Committee may consider necessary to call upon the assembled delegates to elect a President, and after such election to install the said President in the chair of office.'[191]

The draft constitution of the Congress prepared by the Poona Congress Committee in 1895 virtually reproduced the provisions of the 1887 draft constitution for the composition and functions of the reception committee, with one important addition, namely that the members of the reception committee should be persons 'who have contributed a certain minimum sum towards the expenses of the year's Congress'.[192]

Until 1907 the reception committee was elected at a public meeting called for the purpose by the local standing Congress committee. The constitution adopted by the Congress after the Surat split, at Allahabad in April 1908, however, laid down that the reception committee was to

be organized by the provincial Congress committee of the province in which the Congress session was to be held, and that it was to be composed of persons who ordinarily resided in the province, had attained the age of twenty-one, expressed in writing their acceptance of the objects and rules of the Congress, and paid a minimum contribution of Rs 25. The 1908 constitution also laid down that the reception committee 'shall be bound to provide the necessary funds for meeting all the expenses of the Congress as also the cost of preparing, printing, publishing and distributing the Report of the Congress'. [193]

Apparently because it shouldered such heavy financial and other responsibilities, and also because the success of the Congress depended largely on the local enthusiasm which it was able to evoke, the reception committee was given a sort of right of electing the president of the Congress session in consultation with other provincial Congress committees and subject to the condition (unwritten before 1908) that the person elected president did not belong to the province in which the Congress was to be held. Until 1908 the reception committee was responsible for the preparation and circulation of the draft resolutions to be discussed at the forthcoming Congress as also the proceedings of the Congress, but the constitution adopted in that year transferred these responsibilities to the general secretaries.[194] Critics who dismissed the Congress session as a *tamasha* had no idea of the spadework which the reception committee was required to do in order to ensure the success of the annual gathering. In the early years, Hume, assisted by two of his friends of the pre-Congress days, A.T. Banon and J.N. Ghosal, used to oversee all the details of the arrangements made by the reception committee.[195] After his departure from India in the early 1890s, Ghosal stepped into his shoes.

In order to give those who attended the Congress a representative character and to meet the accusation that they were self-styled leaders with no mandate from the people, the Congress made it obligatory in 1886 that the delegates should be elected at public meetings of citizens or by public associations. Full details about these meetings and the elected delegates were furnished to the reception committee and published in the report of the Congress. Attempts were made in later years to improve this rough and ready electoral system. The country was divided into circles and sub-divisions for the election of delegates to the Congress and the number which each circle or sub-division could send was sought to be fixed. But the Congress in its early years had no regular membership or machinery for conducting these elections and virtually anyone who had the desire, the money and the time to go to a Congress session could get himself elected as a delegate. As the number of delegates to the Congress went on increasing, it was decided in 1889 to fix the maximum at 1,000—roughly 5 per million of the population[196]—but the decision was not adhered to for long. The large number of delegates attending the Congress placed a severe strain on the resources of the reception committee. But the Congress had acquired the character of a grand annual demonstration and any substantial reduction of the number of delegates would have reflected adversely on its popularity, besides depriving it of its educative value and a great source of income. The limitation of the number of delegates would have also involved, by necessary implications, the fixing and formation of electorates on some basal principle—a work which was hopelessly beset with difficulties. The leaders of the early Congress, therefore, wisely refrained from interfering with the number of delegates who came to the Congress, or with their qualifications and mode of election. Attendance at the Congress varied from year to year as the following table shows:

1885	Bombay	72
1886	Calcutta	436
1887	Madras	607
1888	Allahabad	1248
1889	Bombay	1889
1890	Calcutta	702
1891	Nagpur	812
1892	Allahabad	625
1893	Lahore	867
1894	Madras	1163
1895	Poona	1584
1896	Calcutta	784
1897	Amraoti	692
1898	Madras	614
1899	Lucknow	740
1900	Lahore	567
1901	Calcutta	896
1902	Ahmedabad	471
1903	Madras	535
1904	Bombay	1010
1905	Banaras	758
1906	Calcutta	1663
1907	Surat	1675
1908	Madras	626
1909	Lahore	243
1910	Allahabad	636
1911	Calcutta	446
1912	Bankipur	207
1913	Karachi	550
1914	Madras	866
1915	Bombay	2259
1916	Lucknow	2301
1917	Calcutta	4967
1918	Delhi	4881

As the Extremists had threatened to swamp the Congress in 1906-7, the 1908 constitution did away with the right of public meetings to send delegates and allowed only recognized Congress committees and associations affiliated to them to send delegates to the Congress. But as this resulted in a sharp decline in the popularity of the Congress and became a source of great grievance with the Extremists in particular, and Congressmen in general, the Congress relaxed the rule a little in 1912 and again in 1915 and permitted public meetings held under the auspices of recognized associations to elect a limited number of delegates to the Congress session.[197]

In the beginning, the delegates to the Congress were treated as guests and were lodged and fed at the expense of the reception committee, but in 1891 it was decided that they would pay for their boarding, arrangements for which were still made by the reception committee. From

1888 onwards every delegate to the Congress was required to pay a 'delegate fee' of Rs 10;[198] this was raised to Rs 20 in 1902,[199] but was again reduced to Rs 10 in 1912.[200] The delegate fee, the cost of travelling—often thousands of miles—to the place where the Congress session was held and the fact that the proceedings of the Congress were conducted almost entirely in English, all ensured that the Congress was a body of educated, respectable and well-to-do people. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote of the first Congress he attended in 1912 (Bankipur): 'It was very much an English-knowing upper class affair where morning coats and well-pressed trousers were greatly in evidence.'[201]

Though the reception committee often enlisted the co-operation of the local students in making arrangements for the annual session and acting as 'volunteers', the Congress did not admit students as delegates.

The original idea of the founders of the Congress was that the delegates should stay together when the Congress was in session, so that they could come into close and intimate contact with each other, but as the number of delegates increased this did not always prove practicable, and they had to be housed separately, often in different parts of the town, in groups, according to their region, religion, or style of living. Though the great majority of the delegates to the Congress availed themselves of the modest community accommodation provided for them by the reception committee, quite a few Congress grandees preferred to stay away from their humbler brethren in hotels and bungalows specially hired for them for the season. The aristocracy of the Congress was thus socially—as it was in course of time politically—estranged from its rank and file. It was not until Gandhiji revived the original idea of the founders of the Congress and forced all delegates to stay together in the Congress camp—in simple huts—that Congressmen developed a real spirit of *camaraderie.*

In the early years of the Congress a few Eurasians and resident Britons attended its sessions, but they soon dropped out. Similarly many big landlords, especially in northern India, who had in the beginning co-operated with the Congress, stayed away from it due to official pressure or the anti-landlord attitude of leading Congressmen. The small Parsi element in the Congress exercised an influence out of proportion to its numbers, mainly because it had such able leaders as Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dinshaw Edulji Wacha. A few eminent and intelligent Muslims from all parts of India joined the Congress during these years (for example, B. Tyabji, Hamid Ali, Humayun Jah Bahadur, Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur, Shurfuddin, Mazhar-ul-Haq, M.A. Jinnah, and Mohurrum Ali Chisti), but they were not really representative of their community, the bulk of which remained indifferent and even hostile to the Congress. The Congress strove hard to secure the co-operation of the Muslims. By a formal resolution in 1888, it assured them that it would not discuss any subject to which the Muslim delegates objected in a body, unanimously or near unanimously.[202] It scrupulously refrained from discussing religious or social questions. It provided for the due representation of the Muslims in its inner councils. Besides occasionally electing Muslims as presidents and general secretaries, the Congress laid down in its constitution of 1908 that one-fifth of the total number of representatives on the All-India Congress Committee should be Muslims, that the president could nominate five delegates to the subjects committee to represent minorities, and that 'in any representation which the Congress may make or in any demands which it may put forward for the larger association of the people of India with the administration of the country, the interests of minorities shall be duly safeguarded'.[203] The Congress often allowed Muslims to wield a greater influence over its deliberations than their numbers warranted. Numerous

instances can be cited to prove how, during the period under review in this book, the Congress, in deference to the sentiments of the Muslims, acted against the wishes of its Hindu supporters and consistently tried to maintain its national and non-sectarian character. For example, in 1887, the Congress declined to take up the question of cow-killing.[204] In 1900, it annoyed the Panjabi Hindus by its refusal to discuss the Panjab Land Alienation Act[205] and even accepted their secession from the Congress for a few years. The Congress offended many Hindus in northern India in 1913 by dropping its previous resolution deprecating the extension of the principle of communal representation to local bodies,[206] and again in 1914 by negativing the election of Lajpat Rai to the presidency.[207] In 1916, the Congress entered into a pact with the Muslim League which allowed the Muslims excessive representation in the legislative councils of certain provinces, in the teeth of opposition from the Hindus of those provinces.[208] But the Muslims as a community remained aloof from the Congress and in 1906 developed a seperate political organization of their own. If the gulf between the Hindus and the Muslims in India remained unbridged, only a part—and a very small part—of the blame can be laid at the door of the early Congress. It is difficult to see what more the Congress could have done, without being false to the law of its own being; constituted as it was, it could easily have done less.

Despite the presence of a few delegates from the princely states at almost every session of the Congress from 1886 onwards and the occasional financial contributions made to its funds by some English-educated princes, the Congress, apparently disagreeing with Naoroji and agreeing with Hume, deemed it prudent, probably to avoid embarrassment both to the princes and to the paramount power, 'for the time being' not to discuss subjects relating to the Indian princely states at its sessions.[209]

At the instance of Hume,[210] who was a bit of a feminist, ten ladies were persuaded to attend the 1889 session of the Congress at Bombay as delegates. These included one Parsi,[211] one orthodox Hindu,[212] three Brahmos,[213] three Indian Christians,[214] and two Europeans.[215] 'The presence of lady delegates,' Hume wrote in his Introduction to the report of the session, 'few in number, but all women who in one field or another have justly earned distinction, is a grateful indication of the awakening that is going on throughout the country to higher and better things.'[216] But, writing a year later, Hume admitted that 'although a large majority of the delegates approved the measure, a considerable section of the more conservative members viewed the prospect of the intermingling of the sweet voices of women in the debates, with the manly accents of the robuster sex, with considerable repugnance. Accordingly, as one of the basal principles of the Congress is to take no important step until practical unanimity in its favour has been secured, a covenant was entered into with the ladies, that they should be seen, but not heard. ... But the dear ladies resented, and, we think justly, the silence imposed upon them; they refused to recognise as having any practical value, the aesthetic charm which their presence on the platform conferred on the entire gathering; they said, "We have *'cacoethes loquendi'*, that is merely one of your unmanly male slanders on our sex, but if we are not allowed to speak, in case we so desire, as several of us did on one occasion at the last [Bombay] Congress, what is the use of our attending? Better have some pretty wax figures, nicely dressed, on the platform; they will serve your purpose equally well!" Consequently, since, until the Congress met [at Calcutta in December 1890], no assurance could be given as to what its views on this point might prove to be, only four lady delegates honoured the assembly with their presence. But this year, thanks, primarily, to our President [P.M. Mehta], to Mr. Mano Mohan Ghose and Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter, the remaining step towards the political

enfranchisement of the women of the Congress party was taken, and a woman was not only allowed to speak, but was selected for the honourable post of proposing the vote of thanks to the President,[217] and was rapturously received by the entire gathering. Thus was initiated, without one single dissentient voice, a reform which, in its ultimate consequences, will greatly facilitate the labours of our Indian women and if the Congress had never done anything beyond bringing about, with the full consent of all parties, this one reform, it would have deserved well of the country.'[218] While the significance of the 'reform' in principle was undoubtedly great, in practice it did not mean much for many years to come. Hume expected not less than half a dozen lady delegates at the Nagpur session in 1891,[219] but only one turned up, and she was a Eurasian—Mrs Amelia Sophia West—from Calcutta.[220] It is difficult to find the names of more than one or two ladies in the lists of delegates at the subsequent sessions of the Congress for the next twenty-five years, though it is known that many more went to the Congress as mere spectators.[221] The impact of the First World War, the examples of Mrs Annie Besant and Mrs Sarojini Naidu, and the efforts of Gandhi served to augment the number of ladies attending the sessions of the Congress from 1915 onwards.

The Congress between the years 1885 and 1918 had no regular membership. It was more of an annual gathering than an organization. Very few attended the gathering regularly from year to year. The annual sessions of the Congress were not distributed evenly throughout the several provinces and regions: of the thirty-five sessions (including the special session at Bombay in August 1918), seven were held in Calcutta, six in Madras, five in Bombay, three each in Allahabad and Lahore, two in Lucknow, one each in Ahmedabad, Amraoti, Banaras, Bankipur, Delhi, Karachi, Nagpur, Poona and Surat. An overwhelming majority of the delegates to any particular session came from the town or the province where it was held, and they were mostly curious visitors rather than participants. It is, therefore, hazardous to try to read too much into the lists of delegates appended to the reports of the annual sessions of the Congress in order to ascertain precisely the regional or social base of the Congress. But these lists do provide a rough indication of what social groups supported the Congress during the period. The vast majority of the delegates were Hindus, who belonged to the higher castes and came from the towns, for the simple reason that they had taken an early lead over others in acquiring western education and formed the bulk of the intelligentsia. They were mostly English-educated lawyers, journalists, teachers in private schools and colleges, doctors, businessmen, and country gentlemen.[222]

How the Congress was used by its own elite for the acquisition of power and patronage for itself was thus described vividly, though sarcastically, by the *United India* of Madras in 1903: 'Public spirit is often a cloak to hide personal ambition. Ambitious persons join public movements in order to attract the attention of the ruler, and attaining the end they had in view, they bid good-bye to the cause which they once espoused with striking enthusiasm. The Congress movement has been till now made use of for this purpose. There have been instances of cleverer men pushing themselves to prominence among Congress leaders and after a few years' activity succeed in obtaining some fat appointments. Once they do this their official position stands them in good stead. Sometimes, with the help of the rank and file of the Congress, they step into the Legislative Council and from there jump into some well-paid judicial office. We do not object to Congress leaders entering official service; but unless such leaders use their position and prestige, as prominent officials, in favour of the movement, the Congress can have little reason to rejoice at their advancement. Officials need not necessarily

render pecuniary help but in a hundred ways the influence that they command might be used to strengthen the public cause. We are not aware that our countrymen who have used the Congress thus as a stepping-stone for personal aggrandisement have as a rule shown their gratitude to it. Not one prominent Congressman has till now declined the offer of a good appointment by Government preferring the honour of his country's service to the emoluments of official servitude. Let us beware of idolising men who suddenly bloom into enthusiastic Congress workers and wait till they show that their enthusiasm means self-sacrifice. He who is this year the hero of the movement next year fights shy of it as a Judge of the High Court or of the Court of Small Causes or of a District Court. We think that the Congress has reached a stage when on the part of its leaders a much higher standard of public life can and ought to be insisted upon than was possible in the earlier years of the movement. ... Whether the gentlemen who got high appointments after their connection with the Congress, had joined the movement with the object of getting them it is difficult to say. It is creditable to the Government that the appointments were given in spite of the connection. There may exist in some minds a desire to get official appointments but we think it cannot be general. A more common impulse seems to be the desire to attain professional success and other *popular* advantages. The lawyer, the doctor, the journalist and all others with a trade or profession may all be gaining by taking a prominent part in popular agitation. And though it would be unquestionably wrong to say that all professional men have been guided by selfish motives, we believe that as a matter of fact several have prospered by reason of their agitation. It has served to advertise them. If the selfish motive of agitation, therefore, is to be described in one word, it is not so much office-hunger as self-advertisement. The Congress gives "splendour to obscurity and a distinction to undiscerned merit". ... Do not help the needy, except for an adequate consideration, but agitate for the country, and your "services to the country" will be manifest and you will be stamped a patriot. If you believe that the salvation of the country lies through the industries, ask the Government to create and develop them. Ask the Government for hospitals and roads and asylums. Do nothing, ask *the people* to do nothing, but attack the Government and teach *them* their duty. That is the highest service to the country.'[223]

The last week of December every year was a period of unusual activity in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thousands of delegates and visitors flocked to the town where the Congress was to meet. As most towns in the country had no big hall to accommodate them (Panjab Congressmen were the first to build the famous Bradlaugh Hall in Lahore for this purpose), a temporary building was constructed for this purpose at the cost of several thousand rupees. Elaborate arrangements were made for the boarding and lodging of delegates.

The Congress usually opened on the first day around 2 p.m. with an address by the chairman of the reception committee, welcoming the delegates and making a few general remarks about the political situation in the country and the work of the Congress. The name of the president-elect was then formally proposed, seconded, supported, and approved by the assembly. The president, being formally installed, read out his long and rather verbose thesis on the outstanding problems facing the country. Following the presidential address, the names of the members of the subjects committee—for which the elections had already taken place or were to take place soon after—were announced and the proceedings of the day concluded.

Less than an hour after the president adjourned the meeting, the subjects committee would meet to settle the resolutions, the speakers and proccdure for the next day.

The Congress reassembled the next day around noon. The rules of business were first announced.[224] Some time was spent on considering the annual reports of the various standing (later provincial) Congress committees, in making important announcements, and in reading out messages of sympathy reeeived from persons in India or abroad. The resolutions of the day were then proposed, seconded and supported by the speakers already chosen by the subjeets committee. The president set the time-limit for speakers—usually ten minutes for the proposer and five for the other speakers. Any delegate had the right to move an amendment or propose a new resolution in the general session, but the introduction of new subjects was discouraged and the Congress generally adhered to the agenda laid down by the subjects committee.

Tne proceedings of the third (and sometimes the fourth) day were similar. The Congress concluded its sittings with a short speech by the president and three cheers for the reigning sovereign, and a vote of thanks to the reception committee, the British Committee, etc. The Congress eonducted its business in an orderly, peaceful and responsible manner. Incidents like those at Caleutta in 1906 and at Surat in 1907 were exceptions; henee the shoek whieh they produced.

The annual session of the Congress was an expensive affair and suggestions were repeatedly made to discontinue it or to do away with its spectaeular character. But the leaders of the Congress rightly judged that an annual congregation of rcpresentatives of many provinces and creeds at one place, for the advancement of a common purpose, was in itself a great advantage and worth all the expense and the inconvenience involved. It broadened the outlook and widened the sympathies of all those who participated in it. It was a symbol of a nation in the making.

The expenditure ineurred in holding the annual session of the Congress varied from year to year, depending largely upon the attendanee. Aceording to Hume, the first Congress at Bombay in 1885 cost Rs 3,000, the second at Calcutta in 1886, Rs 16,000, and the third at Madras in 1887, Rs 30,000.[225] It would be safe to say that from 1888 to 1914 the expenditure ranged between Rs 40,000 and Rs 60,000.[226] From 1915 onwards, the number of delegates and visitors to the Congress rose sharply with a corresponding rise in the expenditure. The total expenses of the session held at Delhi in 1918 amounted to over a lakh of rupees.[227] Part of this expensc was recovered from the delegates' and visitors' fees, but the practice of waiving fees restricted this income. The reception eommittee was responsible for raising funds, and it appointed agents to collect money. Some provinces, for example Madras, were more methodical in raising funds than others. Bengal, which had a large number of wealthy landholders, and Bombay, which had a flourishing Indian business community, found it easier to raise money than the United Provinees or Panjab, which had no such advantages. Besides small sums eollected from the general public, rieh individual sympathizers—businessmen, landlords and princes—occasionally made substantial eontributions. An inquiry made by the government of India in 1899,[228] only confirmed what was generally known that while princes like Baroda and Vizianagaram, landlords like Darbhanga and the Tagores, and businessmen like the Tatas often gave large sums of money to the Congress, the principal subscribers to the Congress funds were members of the professional classes and the smaller gentry. In addition to the expenses incurred in holding the annual session of the Congress, the reception eommittee had to find money for the expenses of the general secretaries' establishment (about Rs 6,000) and those of the British Committee. In 1900, the Congress set up a permanent fund, invested in the names of seven trustees, one from eaeh province, on which it eould draw in an emergency.

The Congress had also to spend a lot of money in England on its British Committee. The journal *India* alone cost about Rs 30,000 per annum, and the activities of the British Committee cost another Rs 20,000.[229] Theoretically, Rs 50-60,000 were annually voted for the British Committee, but this amount was seldom remitted in full. Hume, Wedderburn and Naoroji were always complaining that remittances from India were irregular and insufficient. Various methods were successively tried for raising money for the British Committee, such as by requiring the provinces to pay a fixed contribution, by guaranteeing subscribers to *India,* by earmarking half the amount of the fees received by the reception committee from the delegates at each session, but none of them proved to be a success. There was a growing reluctance in India to contribute towards the expenses of the British Committee due to the feeling that it had failed to achieve anything, that it was extravagant and inactive, and that its journal was not well conducted.

The financial position of the Congress was never very sound. This imposed a serious restriction on its activities and there was considerable strain on the pecuniary resources of a comparatively few public-spirited men in the country. 'Those who can and ought to pay for the Congress', lamented the *Sudharak* in 1892, 'have not the will, while those whose heart is in the movement are, most of them, too poor to pay.'[230] The Congress failed to wrest any substantial concessions from the government during the first twenty years or so of its existence, with the result that many of its early supporters began to fall off. Criticism of heavy Congress expenses increased. Proposals were even made to discontinue the Congress session. It is no mean tribute to the public spirit and patriotism of Indians that the Congress did not die for want of funds. Very few organizations in any part of the world would have continued for so long a time and at such a cost, without showing any tangible results.

Agitation in the press and through public meetings, conferences, memorials, and petitions had become a normal feature of Indian political life long before the Congress was established. The Congress only increased the tempo of Indian politics. There was more activity henceforth and on a wider front; there was also more unity of purpose and action.

As a grand national demonstration, the annual session of the Congress had immense propaganda value and this was the main reason why, in spite of its great cost and inconvenience, it was not discontinued. On a minor scale this grand performance was repeated in the provincial conferences,[231] which began to be held in some of the provinces, though not always regularly—generally at Easter—from mid-1880s onwards, and later in the district conferences.[232] Another source of popular attraction was the industrial exhibition organized alongside the Congress from 1901 onwards.

The Congress had no newspaper of its own in India, but there were scores of English and vernacular newspapers—many of them owned by Congressmen—which constantly agitated the Congress cause. Next only in importance to the press as a vehicle of Congress propaganda, were the public meetings held frequently in different parts of the country. Congress leaders were in their best form on the platform and never missed an opportunity of delivering an oration. Agents, paid or unpaid, were occasionally sent round the districts to secure funds and supporters for the Congress. Reports of the proceedings of the annual sessions were regularly published and distributed in India and in England. Handbills and pamphlets were frequently issued and patriotic publishers like G.A. Natesan of Madras produced a mass of cheap Congress literature. The founders of the Congress deliberately followed the methods of agitation of the

Anti-Corn Law League—even to the extent of issuing 'Tracts for the Times' and 'Congress Catechisms'.

In its early years, however, the Congress had no regular machinery of its own for continuous agitation throughout the year. It was still a ramshackle continental alliance, relying heavily on its constituents, the regional associations, to carry on its agitational work during the year, when it was itself in abeyance. The regional associations lacked funds and workers and their activity was at best spasmodic. The result was that, when the Congress dispersed after its three- or four-day meeting, not much was heard of it or of its work, except in the press. The difficulties of continuous political agitation in a vast subcontinent, economically and educationally backward, were almost insuperable. Moreover, the leaders of the Congress had neither the means, nor perhaps as yet the desire, to enlist the support of the masses. And when the government frowned on some of their early attempts in this direction, they were content to confine their agitation to the platform and the press. The *swadeshi* and boycott agitation which grew up in India during the years 1905-8 in connexion with the partition of Bengal came in a way in spite of the Congress and was not controlled by it. The same was true of the Home Rule movement during the war. It was Gandhi who made the Congress a formidable instrument for marshalling public opinion and the execution of policy.

It was recognized by the founders of the Congress from the outset that there was essential work to be done both in India and in England: in India a programme of reforms had to be matured, and that programme had to be pressed on the attention of Parliament and the public in England.[233] After having laid the foundations of a national organization to voice the aspirations of the Indian people in early 1885, Hume had proceeded in the latter part of the year to England in order to consult with friends there as to the best means of getting a hearing for Indian aspirations from the British Parliament and public.[234] Attempts were also made to take advantage of the general election of 1885 for influencing the British electorate in favour of India.[235] Already in April 1885 an Indian National Telegraph Union had been organized to keep the English press informed about India.[236]

The apparently friendly attitude of Dufferin made Hume for a time 'cherish the hope that some concessions might, by force of persuasion, be obtained in India from the Viceroy in Council',[237] but his own personal quarrel with Dufferin in 1887 and the delay in getting any favourable response from the government of India convinced him that no reform of any value could be expected from the official hierarchy at Simla, and that it was from England that the impulse must come, if any satisfaction was to be obtained for Indian aspirations'.[238] Already in December 1887 we find him writing to Naoroji in England: 'I am very glad you are distributing your articles widely *in England*—it is there that our battle for constitutional freedom has ultimately to be fought—tho' it is impossible to deny that just at present the lines on which the Govt. (apparently without eliciting any serious disapproval from the mass of British Electors) is acting, do not seem to promise favourably for *our* Home Rule schemes.'[239]

With Anglo-Indians—both official and non-official—openly or secretly sympathizing with the anti-Congress campaign of Syed Ahmed Khan and his Patriotic Association, and the latter planning to organize an agency in England,[240] where their views had already received great prominence, Hume became convinced that the Congress would have to follow different methods to achieve its objectives. Echoing the language of Richard Cobden, after the House of Commons had declined to hear the Anti-Corn Law League, he remarked: 'our educated men

singly, our Press far and wide, our representatives at the National Congress—one and all—have endeavoured to instruet the Government, but the Government, like all autoeratie governments, has refused to be instructed, and it will now be for us to instruet the nations, the great English nation in its island home, and the far greater nation of this vast eontinent, so that every Indian that breathes upon the sacred soil of this our Motherland may become our comrade and coadjutor, our supporter, and, if needs be, our soldier in thc great war that we, like Cobden and his noble band, will wage for justice, for our liberties and rights.'[241] The result was the widespread distribution of pamphlets like *The Tamil Catechism on the Indian National Congress* and *A Conversation between Molvi Fariduddin ... and Rambaksh* in India,[242] on the one hand, and the organization of a propaganda eampaign in England; on the other.

Dadabhai Naoroji, who had transferrcd himself to England in 1886 with the ultimate aim of entering Parliament, had diseussed with Hume the desirability of distributing the report of the second Congress in England when he visited India briefly during the winter of 1886-7 in order to preside over the Calcutta Congress.[243] Long before Hume, and far more than him, he had been convinced of the importanee of agitating Indian grievances in England.[244] To him Hume wrote a long letter on 9 Mareh 1888 'full of suggestions as to the work which could be done in England, arranging, among other things, for the reprint of the proceedings at Madras [in December 1887] for eireulation in this country, and exhorting Mr. Dadabhai to undertake the multifarious occupations which he fully indieated'.[245] This Naoroji was prevented from undertaking beeause of his business obligations and current preoccupation with finding a constituency.[246] William Digby, a radical journalist and businessman with intimate knowledge of India who had sinee 1885 been offering his scrvices on payment to Indian nationalists,[247] was already in early 1888 busy projecting his Indian Political and General Agency in London with a view to ventilating Indian questions in England.[248] Naoroji and W.C. Bonnerjee, who then happened to be in England in connexion with his legal work before the Privy Council, saw that Digby's Agency could do all that Hume had sketehed out in his letter of 9 March 1888.[249] The Ageney, which was formally launched in early May 1888, aimed at making 'a systematic and determined attempt ... to arouse British interest, and to enlist British effort, in Indian affairs'.[250] It took up Indian grievances—both private and public—and provided information to the press and Members of Parliament on Indian questions. On the adviee of Naoroji and Bonnerjee, Hume decided to make use of Digby's Agency,[251] located at 25 Craven Street, Strand, London, which also housed Messrs. Hutchinson & Co., the firm of Digby's father-in-law in which he was himself a partner. The Agency began a vigorous campaign on behalf of the Congress. Ten thousand copies of the *Report* of the third Congress, and many thousand copies of speeches and pamphlets were printed and cireulatcd. In the same year Bonnerjee, Naoroji and Digby succeeded in enlisting for the Indian cause the powerful support of Charles Bradlaugh, a leading radical M.P. Bradlaugh, Bonnerjee and E. Norton, a Madras barrister then in England, also addressed a number of publie meetings in various parts of England.[252] For the work done on behalf of the Congress in 1888, Digby's Agency was paid about £1,700, mainly by Hume and Bonnerjee, and it was estimated that at least £2,500 would be required in 1889.[253] In the winter of 1888-9 Digby visited India to secure financial support for his Agency.[254]

In a letter, dated 10 February 1889 from Calcutta, Hume pressed upon Congress workers the vital need for British propaganda on an adequate scale. He pointed out that in India the work of the Congress in consolidating public opinion had in great measure been accomplished, and that, broadly speaking, all Indian progressives were agreed as to the proper remedies for

Indian grievances and disabilities, but 'our European officials—who are here all-powerful—in consequence of service traditions and bureaucratic bias, as a body deny utterly the justice of our contentions, and are not to be convinced by anything that *we* can ever possibly say. We impute no blame to them for this—it is only natural—for the tendency of all the reforms we advocate is to curtail the virtually autocratic powers now exercised by these officials, and unless they were more than human they must necessarily be antagonistic to our programme. Giving all credit to our European officials, and acknowledging their many merits, nothing nevertheless is more certain than that, so long as we confine our reclamations to their ears, we shall never secure those important reforms that *we* all know to have now become essential, not only for our welfare but to the auspicious continuance of British rule in India. ... Our only hope lies in awakening the British public to a sense of the wrongs of our people—to a consciousness of the unwisdom and injustice of the present administration. The least we could do would be to provide ample funds—for sending and keeping constantly in England deputations of our ablest speakers to plead their country's cause—to enable our British Committee to keep up an unbroken series of public meetings, whereat the true state of affairs in India might be expounded—to flood Great Britain with pamphlets, leaflets, newspapers, and magazine articles—in a word to carry on agitation there, on the lines and scale of that in virtue of which the Anti-Corn Law League triumphed.'[255]

According to the instructions given by Hume as general secretary of the Congress, William Wedderburn, who had in May 1887 returned to England after his retirement from the civil service, took the lead in organizing in London in mid-1889 what later came to be called the British Committee of the Indian National Congress.[256] Its first meeting took place on 27 July 1889, at the office of Digby's Political Agency, 25 Craven Street.[257] It was intended, in the words of Hume, 'to preside over the Agency, guide its actions and give assurance to Indian contributors to the Agency funds, that their money is being expended in England wisely and to the best possible purpose'.[258] Its original members were Wedderburn, chairman, W.S. Caine M.P., W.S. Bright McLaren M.P., Dadabhai Naoroji, and William Digby, secretary. Subsequently the Committee was joined by John Ellis M.P., George Yule, W.C. Bonnerjee, Charles Schwann M.P., Herbert Roberts M.P., Dr G.B. Clark and Martin Wood.[259]

At its meeting held on 30 July 1889 the Committee resolved that 'the following are among the chief objects to which the activity of the Agency should be directed. 1. To arrange for the printing and issuing of the Report of the Indian National Congress annually, in England, and to undertake all duties connected with the circulation of the Report, pressing it upon the attention of public men, answering the objections urged in newspapers or otherwise, where such a course is practicable or is permitted, and the like. 2. To urge forward Parliamentary action likely to advance the legislative enactment of the Congress Reforms, by communicating with leading statesmen, corresponding with public men, and in such other ways as may offer. 3. To address the Secretary of State for India, whenever it may seem advisable upon matters connected with the Congress proposals. 4. To conduct all correspondence, whether in England or with the leaders of the Congress in India, arising out of the Congress propaganda. 5. To arrange for meetings in London and the United Kingdom generally, whenever and wherever possible, to urge the adoption of Reforms advocated by the Congress, and to distribute literature of all kinds bearing upon such Indian Reforms when available. 6. To communicate with such political organizations as the National Reform Union, and to make use of such organizations, where such use is offered or permitted, for Congress propaganda work, and. 7. Generally to take all

practical measures to obtain the reforms and the redress of grievances desired by the Congress.'[260]

In a letter to the secretaries of the standing Congress committees, dated 15 September 1889, Hume informed them of the progress made in regard to the formation and working of the British Agency of the Congress, explained why Digby was required to work in a dual capacity, urged upon them the desirability of raising adequate funds for meeting the expenses of the Agency, and concluded by saying: 'We may hold Congresses here in India for ever, but unless we have an active accredited Agency in London, to push our views and din into the heads of the English public, our wrongs and grievances, we shall achieve very little.'[261]

In his presidential address to the Bombay Congress in December 1889, Wedderburn remarked: 'In the Indian National Congress, the people of India, hitherto dumb, have found a voice. But the distance to England is great, and the Agency is needed like a telephone to carry the voice of the people of India to the ear of the people of England. It seems to me that the Agency under your indefatigable Secretary, Mr. Digby, is simply invaluable in bringing India into touch with her friends in England, and in briefing those friends when they take up Indian subjects either in Parliament or before the public. Also the Agency, with the Committee which supervises its working, will, we hope, be the nucleus round which an Indian Party will gradually gather itself.'[262] As desired by Wedderburn and Hume, the Congress confirmed the appointment of the Committee and decided that 'a sum of Rs. 45,000 be raised for the expenses of Congress work, in this country and in England, during the ensuing year, and that the different Standing Committees do send their respective amounts to the General Secretary, the one-half in three, and the balance in six months'.[263]

Realizing that no cause in England had any chance of success without a recognized organ in the press, and that the practice hitherto followed of printing miscellaneous documents for circulation to the British public was, besides being costly, inadequate, for, among other things, it provided no continuous record of the progress of Indian questions, the Committee, on the recommendation of a sub-committee consisting of Caine, Yule, Naoroji and Digby, decided on 4 February 1890 to publish the journal *India* 'for the discussion of Indian affairs'.[264] The first issue appeared in mid-February 1890.[265] In the beginning it came out irregularly, but in 1892 it became a monthly, and in 1898 a weekly. It was edited by Digby from 1890 to 1892. Its later editors were H. Morse Stephens (1892-3), Gordon Hewart (1892-1905), A.F. Murison (1905-6), H.E.A. Cotton (1906-18), S.K. Ratcliffe (1918) and H.S.L. Polak (1918-19). It had a press-run of 10,000 copies from 1894 to 1899; in 1900 it was reduced to 6,000; then in 1901 it was pruned to 4,000; and finally stabilized at approximately 3,000 copies in 1907.[266] It was supplied free to British M.P.s, journalists, political associations and clubs. A large number of copies were sent out to India primarily with a view to earning revenue.

The main object of *India* was to educate the British public and it was conducted primarily to suit the requirements of readers in Britain. According to Wedderburn, it was meant to be 'a storehouse from which arms and materials are supplied to all those who are willing to strike a blow on ... [India's] behalf'.[267] But, paradoxically enough, the bulk of its subscribers were Indians, who, not unnaturally, found the paper to be dull and uninteresting. Attempts were therefore made, albeit unsuccessfully, to render the paper useful and interesting to Indian readers by, for example, giving full parliamentary proceedings relating to India, reports of meetings on Indian affairs in England, and reviews of books and articles on India. The Committee repeatedly considered the suggestion to appoint an Indian as editor of the journal,

but could not accept it because of the feeling that mere Indian experience was not only not enough, it was, in fact, a disqualification in a London journalist.[268] Caine was of the view that *India* was a luxury and should be discontinued.[269] His view was shared by many Indians. The British Committee felt that it was an erroneous view, that the usefulness of the journal was not fully appreciated, and that its discontinuance would be disastrous. According to Wedderburn and Naoroji, the abandonment of *India* would cripple the activities of the British Committee and amount to 'cutting off one's right arm'.[270] As Wedderburn pointed out in 1903: 'They [educated Indians] must bear in mind that without a recognised organ in the press no cause has in England any chance of success. ... But as regards India the need is far greater, (1) because unfortunately the subject of Indian grievances is unfamiliar and distasteful to the British public; (2) because in the London press articles on Indian subjects are mainly supplied by Anglo-Indians unfavourable to Indian aspirations; and (3) because there are no Indian electors to bring pressure upon Parliament and the Government. If India ceases to have an organ in the press of this country, she will be held to have abandoned her appeal to the British public and the British Parliament. The case will here go against her by default.'[271]

The Committee had its office at 25 Craven Street in the first three years of its existence. For the best part of 1892 it met at Trafalgar Buildings, 1 Northumberland Avenue,[272] but from October 1892 its official premises were at 84-5 Palace Chambers, Westminster, 'a very convenient locality opposite the Houses of Parliament; and these rooms, suitably furnished, the walls hung with the portraits of Congress worthies, and with an Indian library contributed by Mr. Dadabhai and other friends, became the permanent centre of operations for the Congress propaganda in England'[273] for the next twenty-five years. When the government commandeered the building for the Ministry of Food during World War I, the Committee shifted its office to 14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, in late 1917.[274] From late December 1919 to 11 November 1921, when it was wound up, the Committee's office was located at 161-3 Temple Chambers, Temple Avenue.[275]

For more than a year after its establishment in early 1888, Digby's Political Agency had carried on work of a two-fold character: (a) relating to the Congress and conducted under instructions received from the general secretary, Hume, or laid down and approved by W.C. Bonnerjee, Dadabhai Naoroji, Eardley Norton and Digby, and (b) relating to Indian affairs generally, in respect of which no instructions were received from the Congress and for which the Congress was in no way responsible, such work being undertaken by Digby on his own authority, and in his private capacity. There were thus, in fact, two agencies under one roof—25 Craven Street, London—the Congress Agency and the Political Agency, though funds for the support of both came from one source, namely, the standing Congress committees in India communicating through the general secretary of the Congress.[276] The committee which met on 27 July 1889 in London under the chairmanship of Wedderburn and which ultimately came to be known as the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, decided 'that a complete separation be made between the two Agencies, the Committee now formed being responsible only for the Congress Agency'.[277] Later, under instructions from Hume it was resolved on 24 October 1889 that no financial support be extended by the Congress to the activities of the Political Agency under Digby in his private capacity, and that in order 'to as effectually as possible distinguish between the work of the Political Agency [under Digby] and the work of the Congress Committee [under Wedderburn]; the designation of this Committee be "The English Committee of the Indian National Congress".[278] This was later, on 18 February 1890, changed to 'the British Committee of the Indian National Congress'.[279]

Following the disclosure later next year that the Maharaja of Kashmir had secretly paid a substantial subsidy to Digby's Political Agency, Ajudhianath, the joint general secretary of the Congress, was at pains at the Calcutta session in December 1890 to repudiate any connexion of the Congress with Digby's Political Agency. 'The Indian National Congress', he said, 'does not officially recognize the so-called Political Agency ... The Congress is in no way connected with this Agency, nor is it in any manner cognizant of or responsible for its proceedings. It must be clearly understood that those who support that Agency, do not, in the least, contribute to the funds of the Indian National Congress. Our leaders have not the remotest connection with that Political Agency.'[280]

Digby had, as Hume pointed out in 1889, 'experience, ability, connection, industry and reputation', and to these qualifications he joined 'a really heart-felt love for India and her people, and a most earnest desire and determination to secure for both, justice and liberal treatment'.[281] His functioning in a dual capacity—both as secretary to the British Committee and as head of the Indian Political Agency—was, however, highly anomalous and confusing. As was apprehended from the outset, this became increasingly a source of embarrassment to the Congress in India and its Committee in England. Digby was a needy man and he often took up causes of doubtful validity—such as that of the deposed Maharaja of Kashmir—and entered into business deals on behalf of Messrs. Hutchinson & Co.—such as the Madras Electric Tramways Company—which reflected adversely on the Congress and its British Committee. Digby's position weakened after the death in early 1891 of his patron, Charles Bradlaugh, and he was compelled to sever his connexion with the British Committee at the end of September 1892. Digby and his friend W.S. Caine, who resigned almost simultaneously, though he rejoined the Committee in 1894 and left it again in 1899, became severe critics of the working of the Committee and prejudiced Congressmen in India against it through their 'London Letters' to papers like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* the *Hindu,* and the *Madras Standard.*

Wedderburn remained chairman of the Committee from its inception in 1889 until his death in early 1918. He was succeeded in the office by Dr G.B. Clark, who resigned in 1920, following serious differences with the majority of the members of the Committee in the wake of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms and the adoption of a new constitution for the Committee. His place was taken by Ben Spoor, a Labour M.P., on 13 July 1920.[282]

Digby ceased to be secretary in October 1892. His place was taken by H. Morgan-Browne in 1893. When he left the job in 1895, W. Douglas Hall became secretary and continued in that office until 1919.[283]

As time went on, changes occurred in the permanent membership of the Committee. Early members dropped out and new were added. The important additions were Members of Parliament like Alfred Webb, H. Rutherford, F. Mackarness, Philip Morrell, and J. O'Grady, and Anglo-Indians like J.P. Goodridge, H.J. Reynolds, H.J.S. Cotton and C.J. O'Donnell. Hume was elected a temporary member on 25 March 1890 and attended a meeting of the Committee for the first time on 15 April 1890.[284] Whereas before World War I, the Committee had only one Labour M.P., J. O'Grady, several others—such as Benjamin Charles Spoor, Commander J.M. Kenworthy, Josiah Wedgwood, Neil Maclean and W. Lunn—joined in the post-war period.

Leading Congressmen visiting England were elected temporary members of the Committee. These included such names as P.M. Mehta, S.N. Banerjea, G.S. Iyer, R.N. Mudholkar, G.K. Gokhale, D.E. Wacha, R.C. Dutt, B.C. Pal, H.A. Wadia, M.A. Jinnah, A.

Chaudhuri, B.N. Basu, G.P. Pillai, B.G. Tilak, G.S. Khaparde, V.J. Patel, Lajpat Rai, Mrs Annie Besant, N.C. Kelkar and A. Rangaswami Iyengar.

The idea of holding a session of the Congress in London was probably first conceived in 1888 when it was apprehended that it might be banned in India.[285] The 1890 Congress at Calcutta decided that 'provisional arrangements be made to hold a Congress, of not less than 100 delegates, in England, all things being convenient, in 1892, and that the several Standing Congress Committees be directed to report, at the coming Congress, the names of the delegates that it is proposed to depute from their respective circles'.[286] The move was welcomed by the British Committee. In a letter to Mehta, dated 1 February 1891, Wedderburn said that the idea was 'excellent', for there 'could not be a better object-lesson for the British public than 100 wise men from the East debating Indian affairs in their midst'.[287] In a formal letter of invitation to the joint general secretary, dated 27 October 1891, Wedderburn and Digby described it as an 'important forward movement', whose main purpose was 'to bring the aims and aspirations of Indian reformers under the immediate cognizance of the British electorate', who 'may also have an opportunity of judging with regard to the abilities, temper, and education of those who, as elected Members of the Congress, claim to be representatives of public opinion in India'.[288] The Committee, however, suggested that in view of the possibility of a general election in England in 1892, the London session of the Congress be held in 1893. It also suggested that 'no other session of the Congress, after that of December 1891, be held until the Congress had assembled in England'.[289] Hume arrived in India on 15 November 1891. After discussing the matter with Indian leaders in Bombay, he addressed a letter from Nagpur to the secretaries of the standing Congress committees on 20 November in which he referred to the suggestion of the British Committee, 'after repeatedly discussing the question and after most carefully considering it, ... that no more National Congress should be held in India until we have had a meeting in London', which, he thought, could not be held before 1894, and so the next assembly in India 'will not take place before 1895'. 'I find', he added 'that in India many leading men agree with the Committee in London, and consider that for the present the National Congress has done its work, and that it is, therefore, inexpedient to continue to saddle the country with a lakh and a half which each National Congress costs until by the progress of affairs fresh work for this Congress arises. In this view I entirely concur. A great work had to be done—we had to clear our own ideas and then make them clear to our opponents: to thresh out, by persistent discussions, the wheat of our aspirations from the great body of chaff that, as in all such cases, accompanied it. We had to find out exactly what those reforms were, which the country, as a whole, most needed and most desired—we had to evolve and formulate a clear and succinct programme—to erect a standard around which now, and for all time, until that programme is realized, all reformers and well-wishers of India could gather and so to place that programme on record that neither foreign autocrats nor domestic traitors could efface its pregnant lines. The great work has been accomplished, this programme has been built up by years of patient labour and promulgated, and it has been recorded more imperishably than on tablets of stone or bronze, for we have graven it in the hearts of the people! Asoka's monolithic edicts still stand, it is true, here and there, fossil records of a happier, purer age—yet for a thousand years or more they have been dead and dumb; but the ideas that we have sown can never pass away, never die, never grow dumb, but must develop and spread as time rolls by, eternal as the race amongst whose intellectual possessions they henceforth and for ever take their place. Here, in India, for the moment, the work of the National Congress has been

accomplished. The work that still remains has to be done partly by Provincial Congresses here and mainly amongst British constituencies.' Hume suggested that the forthcoming Congress at Nagpur was 'needed, not to discuss new subjects, but to put the seal on all that its predecessors have demonstrated and to complete the cycle', and he desired 'that this important occasion should be suitably honoured', and to this end 'every circle and portion of the country should be adequately represented [at the forthcoming Congress] so that this formal sealing up and, as it were, consecrating the labours of this first cycle may carry due weight and appear as what it really is, a formal ratification by the country at large of the demands which the Congress has at one time or another made on its behalf'. Hume also asked as many of his friends to come as possible, for 'this may in all likelihood be the last time that I shall have the chance of seeing them'. 'My health,' he added, 'never of late years very strong, has broken down under the severe attack of influenza, which I suffered from in the spring. I can no longer sustain the anxieties involved by the General Secretaryship, which I must resign into the hands of Congress at its coming session; and independent of failing health my private circumstances will not permit, at any rate for some few years to come, the yearly visit to India which the tenure of the office of General Secretary makes indispensable—and so as I shall be leaving India soon after this coming Congress— "it must be for years and it may be for ever"—and as I have many true and dear friends scattered over the length and breadth of the land, I hope that as many as possible will come to the Congress to say farewell.' He concluded by saying: 'I need not add that, so far as health and means will permit, I shall continue to work for India, and really in my opinion, at the present stage of our affairs, I believe that I can do more and better work in Europe than I could in India.'[290]

Hume's impassioned advocacy of the British Committee's proposal for a suspension of the Congress session in India for a few years—prompted as it obviously was as much by financial considerations, especially the desire to secure more funds for the Committee's work in England, as by his anxiety about the future operations of the Congress in India once he was no longer in the country to personally guide and supervise them, was almost universally opposed by the Congress press, which feared that such a suspension, however, brief, might mean the end of the Congress. The issue came up before the Nagpur Congress in late December 1891, which appointed a committee to examine it closely. The committee recommended that it was 'not advisable to discontinue the Annual Session of the Indian National Congress until after the British Session'.[291] The Congress accepted the recommendation of the committee and resolved that 'the Annual Sessions of the Congress in India continue to be held until all the necessary reforms have been secured'.[292] The holding of the Congress session in London was postponed 'until after the general election of 1892'.[293] At the Allahabad Congress in December 1892 it was resolved to suspend the provisional arrangements set on foot to hold the Congress in London in 1893.[294] In 1893 the matter was quietly dropped apparently because the financial and other difficulties of organizing such a session were found to be insuperable. Incidentally, the idea of holding a session of the Congress in England was looked upon with deep suspicion in certain circles in the country. They feared that it would either mean the scuttling of the Congress in India or shifting its foundations to England.[295]

The idea of holding a session of the Congress in London did not, however, die. It was revived time and again in later years, especially when serious difficulties arose in regard to the holding of the Congress session in India.[296] But whenever such a proposal was made, the British Committee discouraged it and instead advised that a delegation of competent Indians should visit England for platform propaganda.[297]

The Congress and its British Committee relied mainly on the Liberal Party in Britain for the fulfilment of their demands. The British Committee tried in 1891-2 to get the question of Indian reforms made a plank in the Liberal platform through the National Liberal Federation, but failed.[298] The virtual eclipse of the Liberal Party in England during the first twenty years of the existence of the Congress—except for the brief interlude of 1892-5—was the greatest single set-back which the Congress suffered in its early phase. Congressmen repeatedly tried to enter Parliament and to get their British friends elected thereto, but without much success. Only in 1892 did a Congressman—Naoroji—manage to enter Parliament. Simultaneously with the organization of the British Committee in 1889, Wedderburn had planned to organize an 'India Group' or 'India Party' in Parliament,[299] but in the confused political situation then prevailing in England his efforts did not meet with success. Taking advantage, however, of the presence of many Liberal sympathizers with India in Parliament, following the Liberal victory at the polls in 1892, the British Committee organized in July 1893 an Indian Parliamentary Committee, consisting of no fewer than 154 M.P.s, not committed to any particular measures, but pledged to attend to Indian interests, and to see that justice was done.[300] The Indian Parliamentary Committee succeeded in carrying through a resolution in the House of Commons recommending the holding of simultaneous examinations for the Indian civil service in India and in England, and wringing from the government a commission on Indian finance. But these turned out to be Pyrrhic victories.

The Indian Parliamentary Committee remained dormant for ten years following the Conservative victory at the election of 1895. It was revived in 1906, when the Liberals returned to power with the greatest ever majority in the House of Commons, and nearly two hundred M.P.s became its members.[301] It did useful work by way of facilitating the passage of the Morley-Minto reforms.

Hume had foreseen even in the early 1890s that any far-reaching Indian reforms stood no chance of being granted unless and until the working classes came into their own in British politics. In his farewell speech at Bombay on 18 March 1894, he had remarked: 'The great bulk of the leading politicians on both sides, the professional politicians as one may designate them, the men who mostly compose our ministries, however virtuous, honest, and upright they may be in private life, are in public life the veriest humbugs—talking like angels, but ready ever to do the devil's work—to sacrifice principle to party, and justice to those who are weak and politically dumb, as India is, to the exigencies of party political warfare. Taking them in the gross there is not a pin to choose between the professional ministerial gangs of both parties. They are politically dishonest to the core. ... That anything like full justice will be ever done to India until our working-men put forth in earnest the power now vested in them, and bring into office a real democratic ministry, I do not suppose and never for a moment have supposed.'[302]

Disenchantment with the Liberals in the early years of twentieth century led some Congressmen, notably Lajpat Rai and Tilak, to develop contacts with Labour leaders in England for sympathy and support in Indian matters. Even Wedderburn wrote to Gokhale on 28 July 1910: 'The Labour Party seems to be now the only movement with knowledge and independence to speak for India.'[303]

The British Committee was a costly affair. In the first four years of its existence it spent, on an average, about £2500 annually. As long as Digby was associated with it, he 'drew £500 a year as Secretary, £100 a year as Editor of *India,* and £200 a year on account of partial use [the Committee] had of a part of his offices, and over two hundred a year on account of the services

of some of his employees'.[304] The expenses of the Committee increased when it had an independent establishment of its own at 84-5 Palace Chambers, Westminster, in 1892, and more so when *India* became a weekly in 1898.

An informal arrangement was reached between Hume and the standing Congress committees in 1888 regarding payments to be made to Digby's Political Agency. It was revised and ratified at the 1889 Congress in Bombay. But several standing committees failed to pay, and the deficit had to be met by donations from members of the Committee and its sympathizers in India. Already in September 1889 we find Hume upbraiding Congressmen in the following words: 'if [you] cannot so combine as to effect the raising, yearly, promptly and without my having to dun you for every Rupee, of the paltry sum of thirty or forty thousand Rupees required for that primary essential, the English Agency, then it simply means that you and I have been wrong and our opponents who declare us unfit for self-government, right, and the sooner I give up the vain attempts at making ropes of what I have hitherto believed to be good fibre, but which tried by the money test, seems threatening to turn out something very like sand, the better it will be for all of us. ... It comes to this—I am willing to be stoker, I am proud to be *your* stoker, but if you will *not* furnish fuel, your engine must come to a standstill, and, then, clearly, I, a veteran, lag superfluous on the stage.'[305] In July 1892 Hume, on behalf of the Committee, sent an urgent message to the joint general secretary in India: 'Wire one thousand [pounds] or Committee dissolves.'[306] On 3 February 1893 he made a personal appeal to Maharaja L.P. Singh of Darbhanga for helping the Committee out of the serious financial difficulties it had been facing,[307] and the Maharaja promptly sent Rs 10,000. A grateful Hume wrote to the Maharaja on 20 March 1893: 'I cannot tell you what a weight this has taken off our hearts, I mean Wedderburn's and mine, and how it has relieved us from the unpleasant remarks of some of the other English members of the Committee who did not relish having to pay the money that they guaranteed. With this money, £200 given by Bonnerjee, £100 by myself and other smaller sums that have dropped in, we shall nearly clear off all the debt and shall merely require the money to keep us going which I doubt not will begin to come in and anyhow our honour is saved, because it will no longer be in the power of any one here to say that they were compelled to pay India's debts.'[308]

Hume accompanied Naoroji to the Lahore Congress in December 1893, when arrangements were made that the Congress should vote for the British Committee and its journal, *India,* Rs 60,000 per year. The British Committee, on its part, agreed to forward 10,000 copies of *India* every month, so that the amount voted could be realized by the secretaries of the Congress circles securing 10,000 paying subscribers at an annual subscription of Rs 6. Each circle was assessed according to its extent and ability to pay. But the payments never reached the full sum of Rs 60,000. In 1899 this arrangement was abandoned as a failure: the payments from the circles against their assessments showing arrears of Rs 128,000 in six years.[309] According to an informal understanding, the reception committees were required to remit the surplus of funds at Congress sessions to the British Committee, but most reception committees either delayed remittance or were reluctant to do so.

There was at the close of 1901 a deficit of £6775.18, which was met by the 'Permanent Fund', contributed by 'Indian friends' from 1893 to 1900, amounting to £4721.7.2, and by a further sum of £2053.14.6, privately subscribed—mainly from Indian sources—in 1897 through the efforts of Hume and Wedderburn. Hume then decided that from 1902 the Committee should begin with a clean slate. Naoroji gave a material guarantee for the next two years' expenditure.

The Congress ceased to vote Rs 60,000 and in 1900 voted Rs 30,000 only. In 1903 the vote was Rs 32,000, and from that time to 1912 there was no regular vote.

The newspaper *India* was the chief expenditure, costing about £2,500 after its conversion into a weekly in 1898. The activities of the British Committee, and its office establishment, cost another £1,000. Hume always contended that, by his plan at Lahore, *India* provided the main income of the British Committee, besides meeting the cost of the journal. In 1901 the scheme of raising funds by securing subscribers for *India* was streamlined, and each delegate to the Congress was required in future to pay a 'special delegation fee' of Rs 10 in addition to the usual fee of Rs 10 paid by him. From 1904 on *India* was conducted by a joint stock company. At the Bankipur Congress in 1912 fresh arrangements were made. It was agreed that half the delegates' fees—subject to a minimum of Rs 3,000, and a further sum of Rs 16,000 should be remitted to the British Committee for its maintenance, towards payment for copies of *India* distributed as propaganda, and towards the deficit on *India,* if any. The latter sum was guaranteed on behalf of the several provinces by a number of Congressmen to the general secretaries of the Congress, who were to remit the sum collected by them to the British Committee. The guarantee ceased at the end of 1917. This arrangement also did not work satisfactorily, while the outbreak of the war in 1914 added to the financial anxieties of the British Committee by enormously increasingly the cost of printing *India,* and the consequential deficit on that account.[310] Luckily, there was a corresponding increase in the share of the Committee in the delegate's fee because of a substantial rise in attendance at the Congress after reunion in 1916.

The inadequate and fitful nature of remittances to the British Committee from India caused a serious strain in its relations with Congressmen, besides repeatedly threatening its very existence. As Wedderburn remarked in 1903: 'Our time and energies are exhausted in trying to obtain payment of the amounts voted and guaranteed, while our insistence in this matter leads to strained relations with those with whom we desire to be on the most cordial terms. Such a condition of things causes damage to the National cause... .'[311] It was creditable to both sides that the British Committee and *India* were maintained for so many years.

As regards the relationship between the Committee in England and the Congress in India, Hume had written to Wedderburn on 16 September 1889: 'we rely on the local knowledge and great experience of the Committee. Suppose we send home a pamphlet for reproduction and circulation, and suppose that there are passages that they consider require modification or omission, or suppose they think the pamphlet as a whole injudicious or not likely to be useful, they will suspend reproduction and circulation and advise us accordingly, and I am certain that their advice in all such matters will be cheerfully and gratefully accepted. When it comes to general questions the case is a little different. Suppose we desire a certain general question to be published, and suppose the Committee consider it better that it should be left alone, they will suspend it; and explain to us their reasons. In the majority of cases this would suffice, but it might happen that from local circumstances here the importance of ventilating a particular question might be vastly greater than could, without explanation, be realized in England. In that case we would go into full and detailed explanation and argue the matter out, when, the English facts becoming known to us and the Indian to the Committee, there can be no doubt an arrangement satisfactory to both could be come to. Generally I may say that I know that the feeling will be everywhere to leave the Committee as free a hand as possible. We furnish the coals and pay the wages, and we state the destination of the ship; and then we leave it to you

who are on board to settle from watch to watch how best to steer, what speed to maintain, and so on.'[312]

Because it called itself 'the British Committee of the Indian National Congress', and also because the bulk of the funds for its maintenance came from the members and sympathizers of the Congress in India, it was generally presumed that the Committee was an agent of the Congress. In a memorandum prepared in April 1891 Wedderburn himself remarked that the Committee 'derives its authority from the Congress and represents the Congress view'.[313] But when in 1893 the India Office described the Committee to be 'agents' of the Congress and directed it to route its representations to it through the local government in India, Wedderburn, as chairman of the Committee, protested against this ruling and wrote to Kimberley, the secretary of state for India, on 14 June 1893 that the Committee were not 'agents' but 'a voluntary association of concerned British citizens'. This did not, however, satisfy the India Office, who continued to insist that they were 'unable to regard a Committee of the Indian National Congress as not being agents of the body of which they are a Committee'.[314] The India Office view of the Committee was shared by many Congressmen in India, and they were not all necessarily Extremists. For example, on 7 February 1902, the well-known Moderate leader of Amraoti, R.N. Mudholkar, wrote to Naoroji: 'It should ... be the special aim of the British Committee to assure the Indian public both by express declaration and by deed that the British Committee is the agent of the Indian National Congress, the exponent of its views and the carrier out of its resolves. It is very necessary that no ground should be left for the belief which some people are sedulously disseminating that the British Committee wants to be and pose as the master of the Congress. The names of Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Hume and yourself are still received with enthusiasm; the reverence, respect and gratitude for you three gentlemen is still as great as ever in the minds of most Congressmen. ... But I would earnestly ask you to see that the correlative positions of the British Committee in England and the [Indian Congress] Committee in India are clearly defined, that the Joint General Secretary's office in India is made in fact as it is in theory the head office of the Congress and that in regard to the main lines of work your Committee pay regard to the suggestions of the Congress and the [Indian] Congress Committee.'[315] This was not done, with the result that even as late as 1919, Dr G.B. Clark, then chairman of the Committee, maintained 'that the Committee was absolutely independent' and not bound by the resolutions of the Congress in India.[316]

For many years after its establishment, the Congress had no central executive authority in India. As 'the father of the Congress' and its general secretary and only whole-time worker, Hume wielded enormous power and influence over Congressmen. But he was, as he occasionally pointed out, not 'a dictator'.[317] After his wife's death in early 1890, Hume began to spend most of his time in England. In April 1890 he himself became a member of the British Committee, which already had three other founding fathers of the Congress—Wedderburn, Naoroji and Bonnerjee—in it. There were few Congress leaders in India who could compare with these 'Big Four'. While the Congress was in session only for three or four days in the year, the British Committee had a continuous existence. The joint general secretary in India lacked the charisma or the resources of his counterpart now living in England. Leading Congressmen in India often consulted the British Committee regarding the choice of presidents and subjects to be discussed at Congress sessions, and the settlement of factional disputes within the organization. Little surprise, therefore, that in such circumstances, instead of instructing and guiding its Committee in London, the Congress organization in India came to be

guided and controlled by the British Committee. Swami Vivekanand was voicing the general feeling in India when he remarked sarcastically, albeit privately, in 1899 that 'while English officials ruled over us through the Government in India, English non-officials and pensioners ruled over us from England through the British Committee of the Congress, and that we were only fitted to be ruled whether in administration or in our political agitation against that administration'.[318] But this development was a matter of accident, not of design. When in the early years of the present century a central authority emerged within the Indian National Congress, albeit briefly, in the form of the Indian Congress Committee, its first attempts to assert itself acquired the character of a challenge to the dominant position of the British Committee in the counsels of the Congress. The Indian Congress Committee did not want, as panic-stricken Wacha believed, to 'overthrow the British Committee',[319] but simply to shake off the tutelage of the Congress in India to its Committee in England.

Article IV of the constitution adopted by the Congress in 1908—after the split at Surat—described the British Committee as one of the 'component parts of the Congress organisation',[320] but it failed to define precisely the relationship between the two. The almost filial regard in which most Moderate leaders in India held men like Hume and Wedderburn enabled the British Committee to continue enjoying 'a prestige that placed it above control or even criticism from India'.[321] With the death of Wedderburn—the last of the patriarchs—in early 1918, however, the situation began to change. On the other hand, the secession of the Moderates from the Congress in 1918 created an awkward situation for the members of the British Committee. As the acting chairman, Dr G.B. Clark, remarked in early 1919: 'the men in India whom we knew and with whom we have worked are the Moderate leaders who have seceded from the Congress. It is but inevitable that many of us should want to continue our association with them. But then the question arises: How can we work with those who have seceded from the Congress and still remain a Committee of the Congress, whose name we bear, and which has met our expenses, not wholly, but largely?'[322]

In view of the confused and uncertain situation in India in 1918-19, the British Committee was inclined more than ever before to assert its 'independence' and to adopt an attitude of 'neutrality' between the Moderates and the Extremists.[323] This was extremely annoying to Extremist leaders like Tilak,[324] who happened to be in London at that time. It was at their insistence that the Congress at its Delhi session in December 1918 adopted a resolution which said that 'in the opinion of this Congress the Congress constitution should be so amended as to bring the work of the British Committee into co-ordination with that of the other component parts of the Congress organization', and that 'the Deputation which will proceed to England in connection with the constitutional reforms be authorised to enter into negotiations with the authorities on the British Congress Committee' for the purpose.[325]

The detailed history of the British Committee after 1918 will be dealt with in the second volume of this work. A mere capsule summary of the developments during the next three years should suffice here. Encouraged by the decision of the Delhi Congress, Tilak frankly told the British Committee on 26 February 1919 'that it might be necessary for the Congress to make other arrangements for its work in England unless the Committee were prepared to adopt the Congress programme'.[326] With the help of V.J. Patel, the leader of the Congress deputation, and some resident Indians in Britain, Tilak compelled the Committee on 25 July 1919 to adopt a new constitution which provided, among other things, that 'the object of the Committee shall be to act as the Executive in the United Kingdom of the Indian National Congress', and that its

'General Committee shall consist of an unlimited number of members ... who accept the objects as defined in Article One of the Congress constitution and the Resolutions passed by the Congress'. An Executive Committee 'of not more than 12 members of the General Committee' was to be elected annually and it was to elect its own chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer and honorary secretary.[327] The effect of the adoption of this constitution was—as was pointed out at the time by one of the members (Dr G.B. Clark?)— 'to change the status of the Committee from independence to subordination'.[328]

In September 1919, W. Douglas Hall, who had been secretary to the Committee since 1895, resigned apparently on grounds of ill health. Dr Clark, who was elected chairman of the newly-created executive committee on 1 August 1919 but obviously disliked the new set-up, also resigned on 13 July 1920. He was succeeded in the office by Ben Spoor, a Labour M.P.[329]

Though now composed mostly of resident Indians and a few Labour politicians, the British Committee soon had a serious difference of opinion with the Congress executive over the appointment on 2 September 1920 of one Syed Hossain as joint editor-secretary, along with A. Fenner Brockway.[330] Its leading British members—Ben Spoor, J.M. Kenworthy and Josiah Wedgwood—were also known to be against the Congress adopting the programme of non-co-operation. Realizing how difficult it was to control a body of men who were not its paid agents, thousands of miles away and fearing that it might become a source of embarrassment to it, the Congress at its Nagpur session in December decided to wind up 'the affairs of the British Congress Committee and newspaper "India"'.[331]That the Committee was not wound up simply because of the adoption of the policy of non-co-operation and self-reliance was clear from the earlier part of the resolution passed by the Nagpur Congress which said that 'in the opinion of the Congress, it is necessary in the interests of India to disseminate correct information about India and Indian questions in foreign countries', and authorized the All-India Congress Committee to give effect to the resolution.[332] In accordance with the directions of the Nagpur Congress, the British Committee was finally wound up on 11 November 1921.[333]

It is difficult to measure the success achieved by the British Committee. Its failings and failures are obvious. It had no base in the British constituencies. It had to work with limited resources and often under very unpropitious circumstances. Indian reform was not a popular subject in Britain. And though John Bull at home might have been, as was generally supposed by Indians, better than John Bull overseas, he had little time for India. The methods of agitation adopted by the Committee were very tame and gentlemanly.[334] It neglected propaganda work through organizing public meetings. Its idea of a London session of the Congress was still-born. Deputations from India were few and far between. The Committee could not make any big or widespread impact on the British public. It failed to persuade any British party to endorse the Indian demand for reforms. It was not due to its efforts but to those of Tilak that the Labour Party agreed to support the cause of self-government in India from 1918 onwards.[335] The Committee aroused hopes in India which it could not fulfil. It could not claim credit for having been directly responsible for achieving any great legislative enactment for India. It was often inclined to blame its failures on the deficiencies of Congressmen in India. Its chairman, Wedderburn, believed that 'a frontal attack' upon the bureaucracy in India was a hopeless task and that more could be achieved by 'a flanking movement' in England.[336] A good many years of expensive agitation in England convinced many an Indian nationalist that the ordinary Englishman was too busy to care about India and that nothing but 'a frontal attack' could disturb his complacency. The result was an Indian version of Sinn Fein and the bomb.

It would, however, be wrong to ignore the more positive aspects of the silent and steady work of the British Committee. Had it not been for its British Committee, the Congress organization in India might have been banned by the government or just withered away in its very infancy. It was not simply, as the *Indian Spectator* pointed out on 17 January 1897, that while the Congress 'works by fits and starts, and only at a certain period of the year', the British Committee 'works throughout the year',[337] for a long time the only regular organization on the ground which the Congress had in India was that in connexion with the work of raising money which financed the activities of the British Committee in London. The Committee did not allow India to be totally forgotten in the hurly-burly of British politics. It kept in touch with all those who cared for or sympathized with Indian demands. It provided Indian nationalists with a ready and regular means of communication and contact with the more progressive politicians in Britain. It facilitated the passage of the council reforms of 1892 and 1909. It also indirectly contributed to the revocation of the partition of Bengal in 1911, to the appointment of the Decentralization Commission in 1909 and the Public Services Commission in 1912, and to the attempted reform of the India Council in 1914. The Committee kept a vigilant eye on developments both in Britain and in India. It helped in the continuance of the Congress as a moderate, liberal, cosmopolitan, non-racial and outward-looking organization, though in the eyes of some of the more extreme nationalists this was its chief fault. Its journal, *India,* was the only paper which circulated throughout the subcontinent, and, as Naoroji rightly pointed out in 1902, it not only contributed towards the education of the Indian people, but also became 'in a way ... a binding chain for all India to move with unity of ideas and therefore with strength'.[338] It is significant that until 1918 even those in India who were critical of the functioning of the British Committee and found fault with its paper, *India,* did not question the desirability of maintaining both of them. The survival and steady functioning of the British Committee for about thirty years were due to no small extent to the tact and patience of William Wedderburn, who was its chairman from its inception in 1889 until his death in early 1918, and of whom it was rightly said by Hume that 'no Englishman living is more trusted or more respected throughout India'[339] and that 'in all England, India possesses no more intelligent, earnest, honest and thorough-going friend than [him]'.[340] Wedderburn's work in and through the British Committee was one of the many services that he rendered to this country. It may be mentioned in passing that Wedderburn was so encouraged by the apparent success of the British Committee, especially during the years 1906-17, that towards the close of his life he not only hoped for the reconstitution of the Committee 'on a firmer basis', but also 'contemplated the establishment of the British Committee as the nucleus of an Agency, paid from Indian public funds, like the offices of the Colonial Agents-General in London'.[341]

Hume was not only 'the father of the Indian National Congress', he also acted as its *de facto* executive head from its very inception. Early in 1887 he offered to Naoroji and other Congress leaders 'to act as General Secretary' of the Congress.[342] He probably wanted his position in the Congress organization to be recognized formally so that he would be better able to deal with the government on its behalf. The Indian leaders of the Congress were only too grateful to Hume for thus offering his services to act as general secretary of the organization, but they were just then in a quandary as to how the offer could be accepted while the regional committees of the Congress had not yet been formed.[343] The draft constitution of the Congress prepared by the committee appointed for this purpose at the 1887 session at Madras said:

'There is at present a General Secretary holding office at the pleasure of the several Congress Committees, but henceforth a General Secretary shall be elected at each Congress for the ensuing year.'[344] At the 1888 Congress at Allahabad a formal resolution was adopted which said that 'Mr. A.O.Hume be re-appointed General Secretary for the ensuing year'.[345] Moving the resolution, W.C. Bonnerjee referred to Hume as 'our respected friend and universal leader' and added 'that, notwithstanding the attacks which have been made upon him in the past, and despite any attacks which may be made on him in the future, he possesses, and will continue to possess, our unabated confidence. We owe him a debt of endless gratitude. It is a privilege to have Mr. Hume as our General Secretary.'[346] K.T. Telang, who seconded the motion, remarked 'that it is a great advantage and a privilege to us all to have Mr. Hume as our Secretary. Attacks have been made upon Mr. Hume from high quarters as well as from low quarters—but in spite of those attacks our confidence in and regard for Mr. Hume continue unabated.'[347] Supporting the resolution, P. Ananda Charlu remarked: 'Mr. Telang has said, in spite of all the attacks that have been made upon Mr. Hume, but I regard these attacks as the highest homage that could be paid to him—it is the only tribute our adversaries could consistently pay to our old friend.'[348] Thus, Hume's 're-appointment' as general secretary of the Congress at the Allahabad Congress in 1888 was not only the regularization of a position which he had already occupied since 1885, but also a renewed vote of confidence in him, particularly after Dufferin's infamous attack on him at the St Andrew's Day dinner at Calcutta on 30 November 1888.

Hume brought to bear upon his self-imposed task the efficiency of an Indian civil servant, the experience of radical British politics which was almost in his blood, a tireless energy even in old age, and an unequalled knowledge and love of India. He personally supervised all arrangements connected with the Congress sessions, maintained communication with Congress committees and leaders all over the country, looked after the finances of the Congress, and drew up its reports, etc. This kept him busy from year's end to year's end. In fact, Hume was the only Congressman in India who devoted his whole time to political work for the organization until G.K. Gokhale followed his example in 1901. In 1889, when Hume was contemplating returning to England, an honorary joint general secretary was appointed to assist him and a sum of Rs 5,000 (increased to Rs 6,000 in 1890) was voted for his office and establishment. The man who was chosen joint general secretary was Pandit Ajudhianath of Allahabad, an eminent lawyer and one of the most prominent and devoted workers of the Congress at the time, who was also considered to be the right-hand man of Hume.[349] It was also decided 'that Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee be appointed Standing Counsel for Bengal, Mr. Pherozeshah Mehta, Standing Counsel for Bombay, and Mr. Ananda Charlu, Standing Counsel for Madras, to the Joint General Secretary'.[350] It is thus clear that a sort of collective leadership was already emerging in the Congress to replace the 'loving and lovable despotism'[351] which Hume had so far exercised in the organization.

Hume continued to be elected general secretary to the Congress year after year until 1906, though the last Congress which he personally attended was that of Lahore in December 1893. As he was unlikely to be present at future Congresses and had decided to return to England for good, he expressed his unwillingness to remain general secretary of the Congress. But Congress leaders insisted on his continuing to remain general secretary, especially as a mark of gratitude to him for the great work that he had done for the organization. In the absence of W.C. Bonnerjee, 'who almost always move[d] the resolution'[352] for the reappointment of Hume as general secretary at successive Congresses, J. Ghosal, an old friend and colleague of Hume,

was asked to perform the duty. Moving the resolution 'for the re-appointment of our revered General Secretary, Mr. A.O. Home', at the 1893 Congress at Lahore, Ghosal remarked: 'Mr. Hume is unwilling to accept the office this year, not that he is unwilling to work for the Congress, or for us, as he has hitherto done; you may rest assured that he will work for us as hard as possible till he takes his last breath in this world. He is unwilling because he thinks that his failing health will not permit him to work as much as would be necessary to do justice to the office and also because he does not expect to be able to spend even a portion of the ensuing year in this country. But I can assure you, gentlemen, that there is no reason to apprehend that our work will suffer in his hands on account of his ill-health. It has been my privilege and good fortune to know him very intimately, perhaps more intimately than any one present in this hall. I worked with him before the National Congress came into existence and excepting at the last Congress when he was absent from India, I worked under him at every Congress from the very first, living together and working together for weeks, both before and after each Congress sitting and I have never seen him shirk or neglect any work nor allow a single day's delay in doing what, though important, could, without any harm be delayed for days and that even when suffering from fever or such other complaint. On one occasion at the time of a Congress Session, I saw him work day after day, till past midnight, when he had been getting attacks of fever every evening, in order to keep everything ready for the day following. He is an indefatigable worker and loves work, particularly work for the good of our country. Whether in good or bad health, or whether residing in or out of India, I have no doubt that he will do more work for us than any other Secretary we could appoint in his stead. Allow me, gentlemen, to ask you one question: can you conceive the idea of our revered leader, the father of the Congress, being separated from us and from his infant child, the Congress itself, before he is separated from or leaves this world? To me personally, and I say to several others present in this hall, the very idea would be really painful. May the Supreme Being grant him long life and health to continue and complete the noble work he has so disinterestedly, so earnestly and so well begun for the amelioration of the miserable condition of the helpless people (ourselves) of this country. You know very well how helpless we all Indians are without the help of Englishmen of position. Whether Mr. Hume can work or not, so long as he lives we cannot think of severing his connection with us, or with the Congress; and so far as I know, he too never contemplates the adoption of such a course, I mean to cut off his connection with India, its people or with the Congress altogether and even if he ever thinks of doing so, we who are looked upon by him as his children should personally approach and entreat him to give up the idea and I am sure that we shall not approach and entreat him in vain.'[353]

After his initial 're-appointment' at the 1888 Congress at Allahabad, the resolution 're-appointing' Hume as general secretary 'never required a seconder' and was always carried 'by acclamation'.[354] So it was in 1893 and in the years which followed, until 1906.

Though Hume continued to remain nominally the general secretary of the Congress even after his final return to England in 1894 after the Lahore Congress of 1893—being elected annually to that office until 1906—much of the power and authority of the office passed to his Indian counterpart. Unfortunately, Ajudhianath died in early 1892. For some time W.C. Bonnerjee acted as joint general secretary of the Congress.[355] In July 1892 Bonnerjee, who was an extremely busy professional man, left for England, and his place was, 'with the assent of the several Standing Congress Committees', taken by S.N. Banerjea.[356] At the 1892 Congress at Allahabad M.G. Ranade and W.C. Bonnerjee prevailed upon P. Ananda Charlu to accept the

office of joint general secretary for the ensuing year.[357] As Charlu later revealed: 'The device of associating with Mr. Hume, a Joint General Secretary for *all* India, has not answered in the degree expected of it. So much did Mr. [M.G.] Ranade feel this fact that, in the year 1892 when that office was forced upon me and I reluctantly consented to accept it, I was emboldened by the assurance on his part that, within a year or two of it, Mr. Ranade, meant to retire on pension and become virtually whole-time Secretary—a step he was prevented from taking much to the detriment of the Congress—though for a wider benefit to himself and his country in other respects. We want such a one—one not merely with his earnestness, his energy, his talent and his claims to respect but one who, to these traits, would add his maturity of mind, his never-failing forbearance, his uniform equanimity and his all-powerful personal influence and magnetism, to which all would defer and by which the most recalcitrant would be overcome.'[358]

Both because the experiment of having a joint general secretary in India did not work very satisfactorily and because no suitable person could be found for the job, the Congress sessions of 1893 (Lahore) and 1894 (Madras) did not appoint any joint general secretary for the ensuing years. But at Poona in 1895 the Congress appointed D.E. Wacha joint general secretary of the Congress for the year 1896. Proposing his name for the post, the president, S.N. Banerjea, said: 'We have found from practical experience that our work has suffered by there not being a joint-General Secretary in India and it was thought that no better selection could have been made than that of my friend Mr. Wacha to fill the post of joint-General Secretary, not for Bombay, not for Bengal, not for Madras, not for the Central Provinces, but for the whole of India.'[359]

At long last the Congress had found an able Indian suited to occupy the post of joint general secretary of the organization. Wacha did not have many qualities of leadership, but he was an efficient, indefatigable and selfless worker. He remained joint general secretary of the Congress continuously from 1896 to 1913. It was both a tribute to his own qualities and services and a recognition of Bombay's long predominance in Congress politics.

As the honorary joint general secretary, being a busy professional man himself, could not devote all his time to the Congress, the experiment of appointing a paid assistant secretary to help him was tried for two years, 1900-1. The constitution adopted at the Lucknow Congress of 1899 provided for the appointment of 'an Honorary Secretary and a paid Assistant Secretary, with suitable office staff, for which a sum of Rs. 5,000 shall be granted annually, one half of which shall be provided by the Reception Committee of the place where the last Congress is held, and the other half by the Reception Committee of the place where the next Congress is to be held'.[360] But the experiment did not succeed. The person who was appointed paid assistant secretary was a Christian journalist and lawyer from the United Provinces, Alfred Nundy. He soon fell foul of the Congress leadership. And it was partly to abolish him that the constitution of 1899 was itself abolished at the Calcutta Congress of 1901.

Probably the most important preoccupation of the Congress secretariat in India was to find money for the operations of the British Committee in England.[361] The British Committee was always plagued by 'the want of pence'.[362] But by 1903 its financial position had become so desperate that it thought of closing down its office in London and discontinuing the publication of its journal *India*. In India itself the Congress organization was afflicted with doubt, despair and demoralization. It was in this difficult situation that the 1903 Congress at Madras appointed 'the youthful, the brilliant, the versatile Mr. Gokhale' to assist Wacha as 'additional Joint General Secretary'.[363]

Gokhale also wanted to use his fund-raising campaign for the British Committee to revitalize the Congress organization. Wedderburn encouraged him in this dual objective. On 10 March 1904 he wrote to Gokhale: 'In reorganising the local centres the great thing is, I think, to get one real worker in each locality, with whom constant communication can be kept up. If he is not a person of sufficient social standing, this deficiency can be made good by associating him with some sympathiser of good position who may not himself be willing to undertake the burden of continuous work.'[364] Again, on 16 March 1904, Wedderburn told Gokhale that men were more important than money: 'Money is not everything, as is shown by the impending collapse of the great Chamberlain protectionist propaganda, which has the millionaires at its back, but at the same time public opinion cannot be reached unless the necessary appliances are available, and for this money is required ... you are therefore undoubtedly right in making sound finance the basis of your work. No doubt you will also make the personnel of the Congress movement the special object of your care.'[365] Writing a month later Wedderburn urged upon Gokhale the desirability of 'employing as far as possible younger men, who are thus trained in public duty, this being the custom of the great Mr. Ranade'.[366] It is not improbable that the experience of working as additional joint general secretary in 1904-5 and the advice of Wedderburn convinced Gokhale about the extreme desirability of establishing, in June 1905, the Servants of India Society in order, among other things, to train younger men for public service in the country.

Gokhale worked as additional joint general secretary for only four years, during which he succeeded in raising a good deal of money for the British Committee and also in toning up the Congress organization in several parts of India. But from mid-1905 he became far more involved in his missions to England and in his work in the imperial legislative council and for the Servants of India Society. At the 1908 Congress at Madras D.A. Khare, a Maharashtrian lawyer from Bombay, was elected to fill his place.[367] Khare continued to work with Wacha as joint general secretary until 1913. Both of them resigned their posts at the Karachi Congress, which appointed Nawab Syed Mahomed and N. Subba Rao Pantulu as general secretaries.[368] These two Madras politicians remained general secretaries from 1914 to 1917. At the 1917 Congress at Calcutta, their resignations were accepted, and in their places C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Kesava Pillai, from Madras, and G.M. Bhurgri, from Sindh, were appointed general secretaries.[369]

For the first thirty years of its existence the Congress was controlled by what may be called 'the centre party'—by men belonging to the upper middle class, who were highly educated and westernized, who worked through strictly constitutional and legal means for obtaining a larger share in the public services and for representative government, and who had great faith in the liberal instincts of the British people. These 'loyal patriots' looked upon the Congress more as a political pressure group than as a popular movement. But the mass of Congress sympathizers came from the lower middle classes, and had neither the bank balance nor the liberal education which makes men moderates. To the conflict of classes was soon added the conflict of generations and by the last decade of the nineteenth century the demand for more determined methods of work and for a more democratic control of the Congress organization became increasingly articulate and insistent. The demand on the part of many Congressmen that the Congress should have some sort of democratically elected central executive is to be viewed in this context. Rather unwillingly, the older leaders of the Congress yielded to the pressure in

1899 and allowed the constitution of the Indian Congress Committee on an experimental basis. But when the Indian Congress Committee tried, as was intended, to end the virtual monopoly of the Congress by an oligarchy, the oligarchy killed it unceremoniously in 1902.[370]

There were some Moderate Congressmen who disliked the idea of W.C. Bonnerjee and P.M. Mehta acting as dictators in the Congress, but even their ideas of what a central executive of the Congress should be were far from being democratic. For example, R.C. Dutt, who believed that 'we cannot afford ... to make one or two men Dictators', made the following proposal to Gokhale in a letter dated 23 February 1903: 'Let us suppose, the next Congress [at Madras] creates an Executive Committee, consisting of Mehta, Charlu and myself, for organizing and conducting Congress work in India—I was even thinking of adding the names of Malaviya of Northern India and Mudholkar of the C.P. and Berar, to make a Committee of five members ... Probably we 3 or 5 will select one of us—Mehta or myself—as the Chairman of the Executive Committee, we will not trouble the Congress to name the Chairman. Then we shall select a central place, Bombay or Amraoti or Allahabad for our permanent office; and I will in the course of the 3 winter months visit all provinces, create 50 or more affiliated Congress Associations, frame rules for them, explain their work to them, and inspire them to a new life regarding Congress work. More than this—we will train these Associations to work along the same channel, we will focus all the forces of the country in the same centre, and we will work and speak on every question with the united voice of a nation. We will create a moral power which the Administration will soon enlist in the cause of good government. Besides the local Congress Associations, we should have Honorary Colleagues—Superintendents from the different Provinces—yourself and Gokuldas Parekh from Bombay, Vencataratnam and Sankar Nair (or Vijiaraghava Chari) from Madras, Surendranath Banerjea and the Maharaja of Natore from Bengal, the Hon'ble Sriram and the Hon'ble Nehal Chand from Northern India, etc. I shall expect the next Congress to allot £500 for the Executive Committee (to cover office and travelling expenses), £500 for the British Committee and £500 as a contribution to *India.* And I will undertake to be about six months in India and six months in England ... to keep the work going according to our new methods in both places.'[371]

Writing to Gokhale again on the same subject on 12 November 1903, Dutt said: 'The Congress should have an Executive Committee,—to work throughout the year,—to work throughout the country, to be in touch with meetings, associations and the people everywhere, to correspond with the Government, to advise on important measures,—to help beneficent Acts of Legislation,—to oppose such Bills as the Official Secrets Bill. The Congress works for four days in the year,—the Executive Committee should work throughout the year with the authority of the Congress, making that body a living power in the country.' As regards the composition of this committee, he added: 'Our experience of the constitution of 1899 shows that a large body will not do for India. India is a country of vast distances, and men from different parts cannot meet and work together. To be a practical, efficient body, the Executive Committee must be small. Pherozeshah Mehta and myself,—if the Congress appoints us,—will work very well together, sometimes meeting, and always corresponding, so that every action taken shall be a joint action. To some extent Mehta represents Southern India, I represent Northern India. The Congress should also provide for a paid Secretary,—and personally, I know of no better and efficient man in India than yourself. We shall make a capital working Committee with your help. If you find a strong feeling in Madras to have a Madras man also in the Executive Committee, Anand Charlu may be joined with us. Only the more you add, the more unworkable

the Executive Committee becomes. The Executive Committee may be appointed for a year, or for 3 or 5 years, or till the death or resignation of members, as the Congress may think best.'[372] Surprisingly enough, all this was being written by a person who claimed in another letter to Gokhale that 'I have faith in my countrymen,—more than you have,—they have within the last 30 years done more to unite and to strive for progress than any other subject nation in the world has done, or could have done, and God helping, they shall win in the long run when a blatant Imperialism shall perish in shame.'[373] There was a good deal of truth in what the *Leader* wrote a few years later about public life in India, especially as conceived by the Moderates: 'The fact of the matter is that except in few, very few cases, public life in India means the life led by an individual of public usefulness; the people have no lot or part in it. We work for the people, but not with or through the people. The sole aim of our public agitation seems to get more rights for the people, to win larger concessions for them; but not with their support. Our public men may be roughly defined as benevolent despots in opposition; and if they had their way, they would substitute in the place of the white bureaucracy, the Government by the liberal-minded, benevolent, patriotic few, for the good of the people.'[374]

The Indian National Congress, like most other political parties and movements in all ages and climes, was actually governed and guided by a small number of men. They were often referred to as 'the inner circle', 'the caucus', 'the clique', 'the oligarchy', or 'the autocracy'. Their authority was personal and informal, arising mainly out of their qualities of leadership and organization, wealth, social status, and dedication. Very often it was independent of the formal structure of the party machine. There was no regular or continuous membership of this very select group, which, during the period under review in this book, chiefly consisted of the following at one stage or the other: A.O. Hume, William Wedderburn and Dadabhai Naoroji in England; M.G. Ranade, P.M. Mehta, K.T. Telang, D.E. Wacha and G.K. Gokhale from Bombay; W.C. Bonnerjee, S.N. Banerjea, M.M. Ghose and J. Ghosal from Bengal; M. Viraraghava Chariar, Rungiah Naidu, P. Ananda Charlu and V.K. Iyer from Madras; R.N. Mudholkar from C.P. and Berar; G.P. Varma and M.M. Malaviya from the United Provinces; and H.K. Lal from Panjab. By the first decade of the twentieth century, old age and death had depleted the number of these 'managers' and the membership of the 'caucus' visibly declined. The Extremist challenge and the exercise of almost absolute power after the Surat split made them behave a little more autocratically than they had done in the past.

The attempts of the Moderate leaders, after expelling the Extremists from the organization, to refurbish the Congress organization and make it broadly based and regularly functioning proved to be a miserable failure. A Moderate politician was another name for an apathetic man. Those who held the political strings of the party were too old, respectable or indolent to take an active interest in organizing provincial or district Congress committees. Many of them did not even care to attend the annual sessions of the Congress. The All-India Congress Committee was called 'the All Year Sleeping Committee of the Congress'.[375] It met only when it was called to meet, and this did not ordinarily happen more than once a year. Sometimes it did not meet even once in the year, for instance in the years 1909 and 1910. It was a consultative body whose duty was to provide funds for the work to be done by the general secretaries. It met after the Congress of 1908, called upon the provincial committees to make a *pro rata* contribution towards a set total amount, and decided that a whole-time salaried assistant secretary should be appointed. The provincial committees fulfilled only partially the obligation cast upon them; no assistant secretary was appointed. The general secretaries did not even have the money to meet

the expenditure on postage and stationery, much less to do any real work. The provincial Congress committees themselves dragged out a lifeless existence. The district Congress committees were a farce and did absolutely no work. Delegates to the annual sessions of the Congress were not elected in accordance with the provisions of the 1908 constitution. The attendance at the annual sessions of the Congress declined visibly and they aroused little enthusiasm in the country. The *Leader*, a pro-Moderate organ, wrote on 24 December 1912: 'The greatest defect of Congress Organisation is what we may call the lack of organisation.'[376] On 19 December 1914, C.Y. Chintamani, the editor of the same paper, remarked in a signed article: 'I sometimes wonder if in the whole world there is another organization of like dimensions and like importance with the Congress with no money, no office, no whole-time agency of its own; and after 29 years of existence, too.' And he went on to plead: 'Let fresh strength come to the dwindling Congress.'[377]

No competent observer of the Indian political scene after 1907 denied that the Congress was suffering from declining enthusiasm. But, while most of them were inclined to ascribe this to the split in the ranks of the Indian nationalists, there were some, like Gokhale, who believed that 'the causes of it are to be found not so much in the split ... as in the present characteristics of our race'.[378] The campaign of Mrs Besant and Tilak in particular during 1914-16 in favour of Home Rule proved that Gokhale was wrong. While many Moderates hoped to rejuvenate the Congress by uniting with the Extremists, some at least feared that it might prove to be a deathly embrace for them. The Extremists, of course, naturally looked forward to dominating the Congress once they were allowed entry into it. But the reunited Congress produced results which many Indian nationalists of the younger generation had longed for but hardly expected. Nor were these results apparent to any but a few extremely intelligent and close observers of the Indian political situation. One such person was K. Natarajan, editor of the *Indian Social Reformer*, who wrote in his weekly paper on 31 December 1916: 'The Indian National Congress which met at Lucknow last week was the largest attended of any that has been held hitherto. The delegates numbered about 2500 and there were also a large number of visitors. It was the first Congress after the Surat split in which the two sections of Indian politicians who parted company nine years ago were once again united. United is perhaps not the right word, as one of the two parties has practically ceased to exist. For some years past the moderate party has been without a policy, and Sir Pherozeshah Mehta's death last year deprived it of the last of its leaders. Nor has the party which broke away from the Congress remained untouched by the course of events. If the old moderate party is dead, the old extremist or nationalist party has also ceased to be what it was in all essential respects. On the whole, it will not be far from the truth to say that the Lucknow Congress represents a new era in Indian politics.'[379] Again, writing soon after the Calcutta Congress of 1917, Natarajan said in the *Indian Social Reformer* of 13 January 1918: 'Till now Indian political movements have entirely devoted their energies to the devising of changes in the machinery of administration. ... The old National Congress party is dead. Its death has been mistakenly attributed to the activities of some more recent political movements. This is not true. The old Congress party is dead because its work is accomplished with bringing about changes in the system of administration. The [old] Congress had no further programme, no scheme of operations to be taken in hand when the administration had been reformed in the direction in which it wished it to be reformed. It had deliberately rejected the idea of a social programme which would have endowed it with fresh life the moment the constitutional reforms for which it had worked, were conceded wholly or in

part. The political party which has taken the place of the old Congress party has no programme either. It really consists of two parties, one with a history and the other of quite recent origin. The Tilak-Besant coalition cannot be regarded as a permanent one.'[380] In 1918 most people still wondered what the new *avatar* of the Congress would be.

3

Ideals, Objectives and Methods

It was natural for English-educated Indians in the 19th century, who studied history and watched the progress of movements for national freedom and unity in various parts of the world, including the British empire, to desire that their country, too, should become self-governing. Long before the Congress was founded, the British Indian Association of Bengal had petitioned Parliament in 1852 'that the legislature of British India be placed on the footing of those enjoyed by most of the Colonies of Her Majesty'.[1] Speaking in London in 1867, W.C. Bonnerjee had demanded a 'Representative and Responsible Government for India'.[2] In 1870 the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* had raised the cry of 'A Parliament for India'.[3] In 1874 Kristodas Pal had written in the *Hindoo Patriot:* 'Our attention should ... be directed to Home Rule for India. ... if the Canadas could have a Parliament, if such small and little advanced Colonies as Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, New South Wales, New Zealand, St. Christopher's Island and Barbados could have elected Councils, surely British India has a fair claim to similar representation. If taxation and representation go hand in hand in all British Colonies, why should this principle be ignored in British India ... Home Rule for India ought to be our cry, and it ought to be based upon the same constitutional basis that is recognized in the Colonies.'[4] In 1880 Surendranath Banerjea had remarked: 'The question of representative government looms in the not-far-off distance. Educated India is beginning to feel that the time has come when some measure of self-government must be conceded to the people of this country. Canada governs itself. Australia governs itself. And surely it is anomalous that the grandest dependency of England should continue to be governed upon wholly different principles.'[5] Ripon's extension of local self-government in India in 1883 was hailed by politically-alert Indians as the first step on the road to national self-government.[6] In the same year the *Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha* had written: 'There can be no question that a nation of 250 millions can never be permanently held down by sheer force, and sooner or later in God's Providence, and under the encouragement of British example and discipline, the people of this country must rise to the status of a self-governed community, and learn to control their own affairs in subordinate alliance with England. The transfer of power is inevitable, and the duty of statesmen is to graduate it in a way to make the transfer natural and easy, so as to keep up the continuity of national growth.'[7]

Both the direct and the indirect objects of the Indian National Congress were clearly, though briefly, stated in the circular issued in March 1885 which proposed the convening of the

first 'Conference of the Indian National Union' in the following December. The circular said: 'The direct objects of the Conference will be : (1) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other; (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year. Indirectly this Conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament and, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions.'[8]

As president of the first session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay in December 1885, W.C. Bonnerjee remarked that 'the objects of the Congress could for the most part be classed under the following heads:

'(a) The promotion of personal intimacy and friendship amongst all the more earnest workers in our country's cause in [all] parts of the Empire.

'(b) The eradication by direct friendly intercourse of all possible race, creed, or provincial prejudices amongst all lovers of our country, and the fuller development and consolidation of those sentiments of national unity that had their origin in their beloved Lord Ripon's ever memorable reign.

'(c) The authoritative record, after this has been carefully elicited by the fullest discussion, of the matured opinions of the educated classes in India on some of the more important and pressing of the [political and] social questions of the day.

'(d) The determination of the lines upon and methods by which during the next twelve months it is desirable for native politicians to labour in the public interests.'[9]

Speaking on the resolution for the reform of the legislative councils in India at the first session of the Congress in 1885, one of the leaders of the movement, Dadabhai Naoroji, insisted that the ultimate objects of the Congress should be 'clearly and boldly' declared. 'I may here remark,' he said, 'that the chief work of this the first National Congress of India is to enunciate clearly and boldly our highest and ultimate wishes. Whether we get them or not immediately, let our rulers know what our highest aspirations are. And if we are true to ourselves the work of each delegate present here will be to make the part of India where he happens to live devote itself earnestly to carrying out the objects resolved upon at this Congress with all due deliberation. If, then, we lay down clearly that we desire to have the actual government of India transferred from England to India under the simple controlling power of the Secretary of State, and of Parliament, through its Standing Committee, and that we further desire that all taxation and legislation shall be imposed here by representative Councils, we say what we are aiming at.'[10]

But the first Congress refused to do what Naoroji wanted it to do and obviously contented itself with the general statement of its objects made by its president, W.C. Bonnerjee. With slight modifications these objects were publicly reiterated by Hume in 1887 and 1888. In his Introduction to the *Report of the Third Indian National Congress,* 1887, he said that 'the objects of the National Movement, of which the Congress is one, and at the moment, the most prominent and tangible outcome, are threefold: the fusion into one national whole of all the different and, till recently, discordant elements that constitute the population of India; the gradual regeneration along all lines, mental, moral, social, and political, of the nation thus evolved; and the consolidation of the union between England and India by securing the modification of such of its conditions as may be unjust or injurious to the latter country'.[11] These objects were further amplified in the same Introduction as follows: 'The Congress was

intended to bring face to face, and make thoroughly known to each other, all the men of light and leading of all portions of the empire. Thus far, there had been much correspondence, and, here and there, a single leader from one province, on his way to Europe or in the course of travel, found his way to the capital of another province, and there made the acquaintance of some of its leaders. But it was now intended to bring all such yearly together and establish the closer bonds of personal friendship between the most earnest and eminent labourers in the work of India's political regeneration.

'Of course, it was not overlooked that in this way would also be brought together men equally, or even more, interested in other branches of the national regeneration; and that these would equally profit indirectly from these gatherings; and that in conjunction with, though distinct from them, conferences, of groups of co-religionists or co-workers in the same branches thus met together, would be held, and some advance thus secured in all directions. But the primary and avowed objects are political, in the broadest sense of the word, and with these only, and not with the incidental advantages it brought in its train to other branches of the work, it is now proposed to deal.

'Further, the Congress was intended to enable all interested in public questions to supplement their knowledge and correct their views in the light of the information possessed, and the opinions held, by others equally interested.

'It was intended to eliminate provincial jealousies, prejudices, and misconceptions, by close personal intercourse, not only from the minds of the members of the Congress itself but from those of the leading inhabitants, and, so far as might be, the people generally, of all the presidencies and provinces, in each of which it was arranged that the Congress should in turn assemble.

'It was intended to exorcise sectarian and class antipathies by associating in one common work, for the common good, leading professors of all creeds and leading members of all sects and classes.

'It was intended—as no such gatherings could be accomplished, except at considerable cost in money, time, and personal convenience, not only to the members of the party in the province in which the assemblage took place, who were to act as hosts, but to all the members of the Congress delegated from other provinces, who had from one to two thousand miles to travel—to habituate all to personal sacrifices for the common good.

'It was intended, by concentrating the most strenuous efforts on great national questions and diminishing the absorption in local or purely selfish interests, to foster a wider altruism and a more genuine public spirit.

'It was intended to educate all who took part in it, not merely in the arts of public-speaking and debate, developing the faculty of thinking out clearly opinions and expressing them lucidly to others, not merely in habits of accuracy and research, but in the practice of self-control, moderation, and a willingness to give and take; to educate them, in fact, into what, but for the miserable displays of recent times, might fitly have been termed a genuine Parliamentary frame of mind.

'It was intended to familiarise the country with the methods and working of Representative Institutions on a large scale, and, thus, as this familiarity grew, to demonstrate to the Government and People of England that India was already ripe for some measure of those Institutions to which the entire intelligence of the country so earnestly aspires.

'It was intended to unify public opinion by the interfusion of the views held by all classes in all the various provinces, and, eliminating matters sectional and provincial, to arrive at definite and unanimous conclusions on all truly national questions, and to press these conclusions on the Government, not in the spirit of an Opposition but rather as *amici curiae.*

'It was intended to widen the basis of the National Party, the party of Progress and Order, the British Party in the truest sense of the word, until it became absolutely co-extensive with the entire population of the Empire, not solely by the awakening of the masses that follows in each province its assemblage there, but by the missionary labours of all the members of the Congress throughout the year, who, in and near their homes, as Standing Congress Committees and Sub-Committees, by lectures, public meetings, and the distribution of tens of thousands of simple tracts in the local vernaculars, were expected to spread from mind to mind an elementary knowledge of the burning political questions of the day and, generally, of the rights, and duties of all good citizens of a civilized State.'[12]

Though the Congress avoided committing itself officially to any definite ideal in its early years, we have evidence to suggest that its ultimate aim from the very beginning was to secure Home Rule or colonial self-government for India. In a private letter to Dadabhai Naoroji, dated 12 December 1887, Hume wrote that 'though we do not thus designate them—and do not aim at any such radical separation—even in a pretty distant future—as do the Irish—after all our efforts are directed towards Home Rule for India'.[13] Writing to the editor of the Allahabad *Morning Post* on 17 May 1888, Hume said: 'So far as I know, no leading member of the National Congress thinks that for the next twenty years at any rate the country will require or be fit for anything more than the mixed Councils that have been advocated at the Congrsses. But we, one and all, look forward to a time, say 50, say 70 years hence, when the Government of India will be precisely similar to that of the Dominion of Canada; when, as there, each province and presidency will have its local Parliament for Provincial affairs, and the whole country will have its Dominion Parliament for national affairs, and when the only officials *sent out to India* from England will be the Viceroy and Governor-General ... To such a system we all look forward. ... But the country is not nearly fit for all this yet. No one expects that a full Parliamentary system can possibly be introduced here under fifty years... .'[14]

That the Congress would not remain satisfied for ever with self-government in Indian internal affairs, but would also some day try to control foreign affairs, was made clear by Hume in his famous letter of 13 October 1888 to Auckland Colvin, in which he wrote: '... our Congress, though in its infancy, *is* destined to be a Hercules, and true to its prototype, it now, in its infancy, aims only at reforming the internal administration, the nation's domestic affairs, though doubtless, as the years roll on and the reformed and expanded legislatures it contends for, broaden into Parliaments, it will in its maturity, cleanse and thoroughly purge the Augean stable of our Foreign Policy. But why need you or I trouble ourselves about things that can no more possibly concern *us,* than the next transit of Venus?'[15]

But the Indian National Congress in its early years did not concern itself with the remote ideal of self-government. Whether it was due to the advice and influence of their English mentors or to their own realism and timidity, early Congressmen contented themselves with demanding isolated reforms (though some of them could be very far-reaching in their consequences), such as the increased employment of Indians in the public services, the liberalization of the legislative councils, the separation of the executive from the judicial functions, the extension of trial by jury, the reduction in military expenditure, commissions for

Indians in the army, etc. This does not, however, mean that the ideal of a self-governing India was not at the back of many minds. Early Congressmen realized that their country still lacked some of the essential elements which constituted a nation, and that the people did not yet have sufficient powers of coherence among themselves; therefore a foreign rule like that of the British, which kept them together and at the same time assured them an efficient and moderately liberal government, must be looked upon not merely as a necessity, but as a beneficial necessity. They were convinced that there was no better alternative, indigenous or foreign, to British rule in India at that time, and that there was not likely to be any such alternative in the foreseeable future. Their patritotism therefore demanded that they should loyally accept the British Raj as a fact, for its sudden and premature termination was likely to be harmful to their own national interests. Early Congressmen openly avowed their belief that they were loyal because they were patriotic. Even their faith in British justice and their fervid declarations about perpetuating the Raj were inspired by their faith and hope that their British rulers would train and enable them to govern themselves. 'I am loyal to the British Government,' said B.C. Pal in 1887, 'because with me loyalty to the British Government is identical with loyalty to my own country; because I believe that God has placed this Government over us for our salvation; because I know that without the help and tuition of this Government my people shall never be able to rise to their legitimate place in the commonwealth of civilized nations; because I am convinced that there is no other government on the face of the earth which so much favours the growth of infant nationalities, and under which the germs of popular Government can so vigorously grow as under the British Government. ... I am loyal to the British Government, because I love self-government.'[16] M.M. Ghose remarked in 1890: 'To my mind, our allegiance to the British Government is based, not only on the feeling of gratitude which the benefits conferred upon us must evoke in our hearts, but also upon the highest grounds of expediency; for every sane man in India, who is capable of thinking, must feel that any change of Government at the present time would be the greatest calamity that could befall the people of the country. That we should have been better pleased if we could have governed ourselves as well as we are governed by England, is a sentiment which we need not in the least shrink from avowing, because not only is such a feeling natural, but it is perfectly consistent to my mind with true loyalty to England.'[17] C. Sankaran Nair emphasized the same point in 1897. Presiding over the Amraoti session of the Indian National Congress, he said: '... it should not be forgotten for a moment that the real link that binds us to England is the hope, the well-founded hope and belief, that with England's help we shall, and, under her guidance alone, we can attain national unity and national freedom.'[18] In his presidential address to the 1899 session of the Congress at Lucknow, R.C. Dutt observed: 'Educated India has practically identified itself with British rule, seeks to perpetuate British rule, is loyal to the British rule, as Lord Dufferin said, not through sentiment, but through the stronger motive of self-interest; because it is by a continuance of the British rule that educated India seeks to secure that larger measure of self-government, that position among the modern nations of the earth, which it is our aim and endeavour to secure.'[19]

The progress of self-government in the colonies, more than anything else, gave Congressmen cause for hope and confidence. Would England refuse to her brown subjects what she gave to her white ones? Surendranath Banerjea remarked in 1895 that England was 'the august mother of free nations' and appealed to her 'gradually to change the character of her rule in India, to liberalize it, to shift its foundations, to adapt it to the newly-developed

environments of the country and the people, so that, in the fulness of time, India may find its place in the great confederacy of free States, English in their origin, English in their character, English in their institutions, rejoicing in their permanent and indissoluble union with England, a glory to the mother-country, and an honour to the human race'.[20]

Though deep down in the heart of every Indian nationalist there was the fervent aspiration that his country would some day become self-governing[21] and individual Congressmen often gave expression to that aspiration, yet for many a long year after its inception, the Congress as an organization did not explicitly commit itself to the objective of attaining self-government for India. Even as late as 1899, when the Congress gave itself a written constitution for the first time, it did not consider it worth while to declare in set terms what its ultimate aim was. The constitution adopted in 1899 merely said: 'The object of the Indian National Congress shall be to promote by constitutional means the interests and the well-being of the people of the Indian Empire.'[22] The leaders of the early Congress were practical-minded enough to realize that India could not be fit for parliamentary self-government in their own lifetime. Convinced that their ultimate objective lay in the distant future and that it could only be achieved through the good will and co-operation of Englishmen, the leaders of the early Congress saw no need to encourage impatient idealism in their followers or to scare their rulers by raising the cry of self-government for India. It is not improbable that Congressmen would have immediately inscribed Home Rule on their banner if Gladstone had succeeded in his efforts to grant Home Rule to Ireland in 1886 or 1893, for they were intelligent enough to realize that whatever was given to Ireland would have to be, sooner or later, also given to India. But the defeat of Gladstone's efforts (the first Irish Home Rule Bill in 1886 was rejected by the House of Commons; the second in 1893 passed the Commons but was thrown out by the Lords), was a terrible disappointment to Congressmen in India. It warned them against the folly of asking for India something which had only recently been denied to Ireland or of even using a phrase which had become suspect in the eyes of most members of the ruling race. Nor were the long years of Tory dominance and jingo imperialism which followed in England the right time for the Congress to formally adopt the ideal of self-government for India.

Watching the situation at the turn of the century from his vantage-point in London, Naoroji was probably the first among the prominent leaders of the Congress to realize that the time had come for Indian nationalists to unfurl the banner of self-government for their country. Apparently emboldened by the sympathetic remarks of the then Lord Bishop of Bombay, Dr James MacArthur,[23] and actually borrowing his phrase, Naoroji began urging—both privately and in public—from mid-1903 onwards that the Congress should proclaim 'Self-Government under British Paramountcy' to be the goal of its endeavours. 'The time is come', he wrote to R.C. Dutt on 5 July 1903, 'when an agitation must be begun for Self-Government under British Paramountcy. The work will be slow, but every effort needs to be concentrated on this purpose. At my age it will not be my lot to take any long part in this great battle, and I am therefore the more anxious to see that younger hands and hearts set themselves to work.'[24] In his message to the Madras Congress in December 1903, Naoroji said: 'We have been lately expressing our gratitude to the Lord Bishop of Bombay, and we cannot do better than to keep up our struggle for the goal which the good Bishop has pointed out to us: "Self-Government under British Paramountcy". This must be the aim, the mission of the educated Indians. Till this is attained, there is no chance of the evil of bleeding, or the plunder of an unceasing foreign invasion, the cause of all our sufferings, ever ending. If the large mass of Indians make up unitedly their

mind that they will have this "Self-Government under British Paramountcy" and nothing less, and if the British people see that Indians are determined to rise in their material, moral and political condition, I have no doubt that the British people, in the spirit of their instincts of liberty and justice, will accord the demand.'[25]

On 1 June 1904 Naoroji and his old friend, William Digby, addressed the London India Society, an organization of Indian students in Britain. Digby, who was the first one to speak, referred to the marvellous achievements of Japan, to the noble policy being pursued by the United States in the Philippines and to the inability of the average Englishman to appreciate the numerous individual and local grievances voiced by the Congress, and suggested that the fortheoming session of the Congress at Bombay 'should eoncentrate on one subject only'—'the need for Indian self-government'.[26] Naoroji followed Digby and spoke in a similar vein. He emphasized that there was only 'one remedy for the present dishonourable, hypocritical and destructive system' of British rule in India and that was 'self-government under British paramountey'. 'When this fundamental remedy would be aecomplished', he remarked, 'every other evil or defect of the present system—all material and moral evils and administrative defects—would right themselves.' He revealed how at the very first Congress in 1885 he had indicated 'this great and absolute necessity of the situation as the chief object and mission of the Congress' and remarked that 'it was high time—as matters had gone from bad to worse under sueh rulers as Lord George Hamilton and Lord Curzon—that Indians took up this demand as the front and foreground of their work'.[27] The suggestion of Digby and Naoroji was at once and almost universally approved by the nationalist press in India. In the second half of 1904 Naoroji wrote several times to Wacha insisting that the forthcoming Congress at Bombay should adopt a resolution on self-government.[28] Wacha kept on assuring him that this would be done after carefully discussing the matter with Cotton and Wedderburn who were coming to the Congress,[29] but, for reasons whieh can only be guessed, it was not done. Instead, the Bombay Congress adopted a resolution which said, 'That in the opinion of the Congress, the time has arrived when the people of this country should be allowed a larger voice in the administration and control of the affairs of their country by (a) The bestowal on each Province or Presidency of India of the franchise to return at least two members to the English House of Commons. (b) An enlargement of both the Supreme and Provincial Councils—increasing the number of non-official members therein, and giving them the right to divide the Council in all financial matters coming before them—the Head of the Government concerned possessing the power of veto. (e) The appointment of Indian representatives (who shall be nominated by the eleeted members of the Legislative Councils) as Members of the India Council in London and of the Executive Councils of the Government of India and the Governments of Bombay and Madras.'[30] V. Krishnaswami Iyer, M.M. Malaviya and Jehangir Petit, who spoke on the resolution, emphasized the need for extending representative institutions and granting self-government to India.[31] In his presidential address to the Bombay session of the Indian National Congress in December 1904, Sir Henry Cotton himself declared self-government within the British empire to be the objective of the Indian people. 'The ideal of the Indian people', remarked Cotton on the occasion, 'is the establishment of a federation of free and separate States, the United States of India, placed on a fraternal footing with the self-governing Colonies ... under the aegis of Great Britain.'[32]

There was nothing new or revolutionary about this ideal, but it had never before been put forward in such unmistakable terms from the Congress platform. And in the eireumstances of

the time it acquired a peculiar significance and was taken up by others. G.K. Gokhale incorporated the ideal of self-government on the colonial model in the preamble to the rules of his Servants of India Society founded by him in June 1905.[33] In the autumn of 1905, while on a visit to England, he advanced it from numerous platforms as the ultimate goal of the educated classes in India.[34] Naoroji had not relented his pressure. In his message to the Indian people in November 1905, he re-emphasized 'the absolute necessity of freedom and self-government like that of the Colonies' as the only remedy for India's woes and wrongs.[35] Presiding over the 1905 session of the Congress at Banaras, Gokhale declared: 'The goal of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that in course of time a form of Government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing Colonies of the British Empire.'[36] In an interview with John Morley on 1 August 1906, Gokhale acquainted the new Liberal secretary of state for India, with the ultimate hope and design of the Congress— 'India to be on the footing of a self-governing colony'—and was met with the rejoinder that 'for many a day to come—long beyond the span of time that may be left to me—this was a mere dream'.[37] But Gokhale could not afford to be discouraged. Curzon had raised a storm in India by his words and deeds; he had a bred a spirit of resentment among the educated classes and brought them face to face with their rulers. As a combative response to his partition of Bengal, a boycott movement had been launched in that province. A new school of thought had developed within the Congress which began to preach the ideal of 'absolute autonomy' and 'freedom' for British rule. A 'new patriotism' had grown up as opposed to the 'old', 'loyal patriotism' of the founders of the Congress.

The rise of radical nationalism in India in the first decade of the twentieth century was, however, no sudden or unexpected development. The climate of political opinion in the country had begun to change since the 1890s. The number of educated Indians was fast increasing and job opportunities were not keeping pace. Repeated droughts and famines which took millions of lives and caused widespread misery, a devastating plague epidemic that raged for years, the economic hardships of the middle classes due to the rise in prices and increase in unemployment, and the high-handed methods of the British government in dealing with both rural and urban discontent—all served to transform the temper of educated Indians radically in the 1890s.

The Indian National Congress was the child of Gladstonian liberalism, but the first twenty years of its existence coincided with the ascendancy of the Tory Party and the growth of jingo imperialism in Britain. Disappointed of the burcaucracy in India, the Congress had from its very inception tended to concentrate all its hopes on the democracy in Britain. The apathy of the latter, too, during this crucial early period, towards their very modest and reasonable demands, saddened and disillusioned those who had launched the movement with great hope and faith in the sense of justice and freedom of the British people. The younger nationalists began to develop a Faust-like mood.

Even in the later 1880s, criticism of Congress ideals, organization and methods of agitation was occasionally voiced in the Indian press, particularly in newspapers which tried to reflect lower middle-class opinion, but in the 1890s it became more marked. For example, in 1893-4, in a series of articles published in the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay and entitled 'New Lamps for Old',[38] Aurobindo Ghose made a scathing attack on the Indian National Congress. He denounced its suppliant ways, accused its leaders of timidity, lack of vision and earnestness, and pronounced it to be an utter failure. 'The walls of Anglo-Indian Jericho', he wrote, 'stand

yet without a breach, and the dark spectre of Penury draws her robe over the land in greater volume and with an ampler sweep.'[39] The Congress represented 'not the mass of the population, but a single and a very limited class'— 'our new middle class'[40]— 'journalists, barristers, doctors, officials, graduates and traders—who have grown up and are increasing with prurient rapidity under the aegis of the British rule'.[41] Aurobindo Ghose maintained that 'the Congress fails, because it has never been, and has made no honest endeavour to be, a popular body empowered by the fiat of the Indian people in its entirety'.[42] Instead of drawing on the revolutionary traditions of France, or even those of America, Ireland and Italy, the Congress had slavishly followed the English model, which was unsuited to India.[43] He summed up his formidable indictment of the Congress thus: 'I say, of the Congress, then this,—that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their accomplishment is not the spirit of sincerity and wholeheartedness, and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, the leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders; in brief, that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at any rate by the one-eyed.'[44] 'Our actual enemy', he insisted, 'is not any force exterior to ourselves, but our own crying weakness, our cowardice, our selfishness, our hypocrisy, our purblind sentimentalism. ... Our appeal, the appeal of every high-souled and self-respecting nation, ought not to be to the opinion of the Anglo-Indians, no, nor yet to the British sense of justice, but to our own reviving sense of manhood, to our own sincere fellow-feeling ... with the silent and suffering people of India.'[45] According to Aurobindo Ghose, 'our first and holiest duty' should be 'the elevation and enlightenment of the proletariate',[46] for the proletariate was 'the real key of the situation'.[47] 'Torpid he is and immobile; he is nothing of an actual force, but he is a very great potential force, and whoever succeeds in understanding and eliciting his strength, becomes by the very fact master of the future.'[48]

Aurobindo Ghose's fierce attack on the Congress in 1893-4, which foreshadowed the coming extremist challenge, was symptomatic of the rebellious feelings which were animating the younger generation in India. The latter soon found a leader in the formidable personality of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, with his emphasis on Hindu conservatism, mass appeal and direct action. The rise of radical nationalism in India in the 1890s was at once a conservative and a revolutionary phenomenon. It drew its inspiration, on the one hand, from the reaction towards Indian religion and Indian way of life, of which the chief exponents were Dayanand and Vivekanand. On the other hand, it tried to apply to the Indian situation methods of mass agitation and even terrorism borrowed from the west. The tide of western liberalism began to recede in India by the end of the nineteenth century. Men searched for the moral basis of nationalism and found it in native history, religion and institutions. The past became glorified and transfigured. Old gods and heroes were invoked to drive away alien rulers.

The failure of the older moderate leaders of the Congress to secure any substantial concessions from the British, encouraged younger men—first called 'radicals' but later known as 'extremists'—to become increasingly critical of them, their ideals, and their methods of agitation and organization. The younger men were bitter against their elders at their inability to wrest concessions from the British government, and against their rulers for their attitude of indifference and hostility towards the demands of moderate men. They denounced the Congress as a mere four-day *tamasha,* organized by a few anglicized lawyers. They condemned its domination by an oligarchy. They hated its abject and academic tone. They accused its leaders of a lack of patriotism and of being interested mainly in the loaves and fishes of office. They

wanted the Congress to become a mass organization, pursuing more self-reliant and vigorous methods of agitation, and clearly aiming at the freedom of the country. They demanded that the Congress should have a definite constitution and be more democratically controlled.

The controversy over ideals and methods within the Congress, which began in the last decade of the nineteenth century, was indicative of a deeper schism within the movement. It was essentially a conflict between palsied age and fiery youth, between an upper middle-class leadership and a lower middle-class following.

The forces of radical nationalism in India were aided in the first decade of the twentieth century by the accidents of time and circumstance. The carrying out of the partition of Bengal by Curzon in 1905, in spite of determined local protests, finally discredited the moderate methods of remonstrance and petition. The hopes aroused by the coming into power of a Liberal government in Britain towards the end of 1905 were disappointed when Morley, the new secretary of state for India, declared the partition to be 'a settled fact'[49] and remarked that the transplantation of English institutions to India was 'a fantastic and ludicrous dream'.[50] The need for new and more determined methods of agitation came to be widely felt. Those who watched the triumphs of Japan, the revolutionary rumblings in Russia, the rise of the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland, the Egyptian struggle for freedom, the Young Turk revolt, the adoption of a constitution in Persia, the introduction of representative institutions in the Philippines, and the granting of responsible self-government to the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony could not but be filled with new-born aspirations for their country and prompted to more energetic action.

The rebels within the Congress, led by men like Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Aurobindo Ghose, Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal, styled themselves the 'New Party' in order to distinguish themselves from the old organization. They called themselves 'Nationalists' as opposed to the old loyalist Congressmen. Their critics nicknamed them 'Extremists'.

The older nationalists, henceforth to be called the Moderates, had tended to regard British rule as a beneficial necessity. The Extremists believed that any foreign rule, however just and benevolent, was a curse. For the Moderates, loyalty was synonymous with patriotism. The Extremists thought that loyalty to British rule was incompatible with patriotism. The Moderates had faith in the liberality and sense of justice of the British prople. The Extremists dismissed this faith in British justice and liberality as a snare and a delusion. Philanthropy, they said, had no place in politics; and appeals to the good feelings of rulers were vain. The Moderates had been anxious to keep down the racial element in their political agitation. The Extremists did not hesitate to foster racial antagonism.

The Congress had so far devoted itself to demanding isolated reforms and the redress of particular grievances. The Extremists did not believe in these palliatives and tinkerings. They demanded a radical change in the system of government itself—'the substitution for the autocratic bureaucracy, which at the present misgoverns us, of a free and democratic system of Government and the entire removal of foreign control in order to make way for perfect national liberty'.[51] The older Congressmen believed that the continuance of British rule was the indispensable condition of India's progress and prosperity. The Extremists argued that political freedom was the essential preliminary to all national progress. As Aurobindo Ghose put it: 'Political freedom is the life-breath of a nation; to attempt social reform, educational reform, industrial expansion, the moral improvement of the race without aiming first and foremost at political freedom, is the very height of ignorance and futility.'[52]

The Extremists were eager to foreshorten history. England had hitherto been the model for the politically-minded classes in India. Their teachers had been English books and English politicians. They could not conceive of a truly popular and democratic government in India except by a process of gradual and slow evolution, of progress broadening from precedent to precedent. The Extremists dismissed the English model as unsuited to India. How could the experience of an independent nation, they asked, be a valid guide to a subject people? They appealed instead to the revolutionary traditions of France, America, Italy and Ireland. Constitutional agitation, they said, in a country where there was no constitution and the people had no control over the administration, was futile. Borrowing the methods of the Irish Sinn Fein,[53] they preached the need for organized passive resistance and self-reliance. The British government in India was, they argued, based upon the help of the few and the acquiescence of the many. It was *maya,* a hypnotic illusion, which had to be destroyed. They hoped to make the administration impossible by an organized refusal to do anything which might help the rulers. They advocated a boycott of British goods, government-controlled schools and colleges, law courts, and executive authority in general. Along with this boycott, a campaign of self-development was to be launched aimed at the promotion of *swadeshi* (indigenous) goods, national education, arbitration courts, and the organization of public life independent of the government—building up from the villages to a central national polity. For the time being their movement was to be confined to abstention from any co-operation with the government, but if the latter did not pay any heed to their demands, recourse was to be taken to such measures as the non-payment of taxes. They were to begin with the principle of 'no control, no assistance', but when they had developed strength and a parallel government of their own, they could present an ultimatum to their alien rulers. The Extremists hoped to achieve their objectives by peaceful and legal methods, but they did not rule out the possibility of resistance to 'unjust laws', or of resorting to force in self-defence, for after all, as they said, a boycott was a war.

With such ideas and such a programme, it was but natural that the New Party should have fallen foul of the Congress ideal of self-government for India on the colonial model. Aurobindo Ghose wrote in 1907: 'The Congress has contented itself with demanding self-government as it exists in the Colonies. We of the new school would not pitch our ideal one inch lower than absolute *Swaraj*—self-government as it exists in the United Kingdom. We believe that no smaller ideal can inspire national revival or nerve the people of India for the fierce, stubborn and formidable struggle by which alone they can again become a nation. We believe that this newly awakened people, when it has gathered its strength together, neither can nor ought to consent to any relations with England less than that of equals in a confederacy. To be content with the relations of master and servant or superior and subordinate, would be a mean and pitiful aspiration unworthy of manhood; to strive for anything less than a strong and glorious freedom would be to insult the greatness of our past and the magnificent possibilities of our future.'[54] It is noteworthy that Aurobindo Ghose and his associates were not opposed to having friendly relations with Great Britain on a footing of equality. In fact, the new religion of patriotism which they preached was permeated with a vague universal ideal of the ultimate unity of mankind. But they insisted that the nation must first realize its destiny to the full, unhampered in the least degree by foreign control. If India was to retain her individuality, said Aurobindo Ghose, as a political and cultural unit and fulfil her mission in the world, she could not do so 'overshadowed by a foreign power and a foreign civilization'.[55] 'The world needs India', he wrote, 'and needs her free. ... She must live her own life and not the life of a part or

subordinate in a foreign Empire.'[56] To Aurobindo Ghose the ideal of colonial self-government for India was 'the very negation of patriotism' and a 'political monstrosity'. He, instead, propagated the ideal of 'absolute autonomy' and 'unqualified *Swaraj*'.[57]

One of Aurobindo Ghose's closest political associates, Bipin Chandra Pal, discussed at length the impracticability and impossibility of 'self-government under British paramountcy' for India in his famous speeches at Madras in May 1907.[58] If Britain controlled Indian foreign policy, he said, she could not do so without controlling India's armed forces and this would entail control of the purse, which would be a negation of India's right of self-taxation and self-government. The argument that Britain protected her colonies without demanding the expenses thereof and could treat India similarly was, in his view, invalid, for the colonies stood on a different footing. They were white and inhabited by the kith and kin of the British people. They received Britain's surplus population and her help in developing their resources. Britain was interested in their safety and well-being both for their sakes and her own. What Britain did for her colonies, Pal argued, she would not do for India. He then tried to prove how self-government within the British empire would either be no self-government for India or no real overlordship for Britain. Indians would not be satisfied with 'a shadow of self-government' nor would Britain be satisfied with 'a shadowy overlordship'.[59] If India became self-governing like the colonies, he said, she would impose protective tariffs in order to encourage her industries and do away with the privilege currently enjoyed by British capital in the country, and this could never be tolerated by Britain. Moreover, if a country as large and populous as India obtained self-government, 'the [British] Empire would cease to be British', for India would soon become 'the predominant partner in this imperial firm'.[60] Pal, therefore, believed that Britain would herself prefer to have a self-governing India as an ally, like Japan, rather than as a partner in the empire.

This frank and open repudiation of the ideal of colonial self-government for India by Aurobindo Ghose and Bipin Chandra Pal was not much to the taste of the acknowledged leader of the Extremists, Tilak, who for all his active and militant politics, was a great realist. He wrote in his paper, the *Kesari,* early in 1907 that self-government on the colonial model sufficed for him as an ideal to work for.[61] His difference with the Moderates, he repeatedly pointed out, was not with regard to the objective but only with regard to the methods of agitation to be pursued by the Congress. The young, impatient idealists in India, who looked up to Tilak as 'the one possible leader for a revolutionary party',[62] were disappointed to discover in their hero an old-world politician, cautious and conservative, who would not inscribe an academic and dangerous ideal on his banner.

While the Moderates demanded self-government as the right of Indians as British citizens, the Extremists were inclined to take their stand on the French revolutionary doctrine that freedom was their birthright as human beings. While the Moderates believed in appealing to the reason and generosity of their rulers, the Extremists tried to appeal to their fears. While the Moderates believed in borrowing wholesale from the west, the Extremists were anxious that India should retain her individuality. The Moderates and the Extremists also differed on the question of the character of the Indian National Congress. The Moderates wanted the Congress to remain an elitist organization. The Extremists were out to wrest control of the Congress and turn it into a mass organization.

Generally speaking, the Moderates were upper middle-class men, elderly, well-to-do, liberally educated, anglicized, secular in outlook, conservative in political matters, influenced

by British constitutionalism, apathetic and cautious. In the same manner, the Extremists may be described as lower middle-class men, younger in age, not very well-to-do, not so liberally educated, less anglicized, less secular in outlook, radical in political matters, influenced by European revolutionary ideas, energetic and bold. In 1913 Edwyn Bevan tried to distinguish between the Moderates and the Extremists in India by using the metaphor of a man unable to swim, who was upheld and grasped in deep water by a strong swimmer. 'The swimmer says, "If I let you go, you will only sink." The man, if he is a Moderate, replies, "Yes, I want you to go on holding me, but I don't want you to hold me so *tight*", whereas the Extremist says, "I know I shall go under and have a horrible time of choking and distress, but that is the only way in which I can learn to swim."'[63] Bevan also tried to point out that the Extremists had grasped splendidly one great truth—that emancipation meant something much wider and deeper than politics, that it was a matter of building up a national character, of renewing all departments of life. The Extremists, he added, had turned away from the rationalism and secularism of the Moderates to old religious and cultural traditions. They believed that India would gain little if she only shook off the alien government and did not get back her soul. They had a genuine religious craving for something larger and richer than narrow rationalism. This aspect of Extremism in India seemed to Bevan in many ways like the Romantic movement which had marked the early part of the nineteenth century in Europe and which was a recoil from the eighteenth century rationalism and enlightenment. It was in part the breaking out of the human spirit from an imprisonment which cut it off from the wide-stretching fields of its inheritance.[64]

The rapid growth of the New Party alarmed the Moderates. It threatened to destroy them, the Congress, and the reforms which they expected the Liberal government in Britain to introduce in India. Already in the summer of 1906 Morley, the secretary of state for India, had assured Gokhale that the British government was in earnest to make an effective move in the direction of 'reasonable reforms' in India and warned him that the surest way to spoil their chances was 'the perversity and unreason' of his friends and their 'clamour for the impossible'.[65] Would the old leaders of the Congress throw overboard their rebellious followers and thus save the Congress and the reforms? *The Times* in a special article on 16 October 1906 frankly recommended such a course of action. It suggested to the Moderates 'a public repudiation' of the Extremists both as a matter of public honesty, for men holding such divergent views as Gokhale and Tilak should not continue the pretence of working together, and in order to strengthen their own position. 'If the idea of separation from England were explicitly disavowed and condemned' and the Extremists formally repudiated, the writer of the special article in *The Times* said, the Congress would secure the support of Englishmen and Muslims who sympathized with its aspirations for moderate progress; it would be able to exert greater influence upon public affairs and 'the bulk of the other reforms demanded by the Congress would probably be realized'.[66]

The Moderates still hesitated to take such a course. They were anxious to avoid an open split in the Congress and thereby weaken it. Nor were they without hope of winning over the Extremists by means of persuasion. In order to counteract the election of Tilak as president of the Congress, for which some Extremists, notably from Bengal, were working and which would have been a signal that the Congress had been captured by the radicals, the Moderate leaders persuaded Dadabhai Naoroji to come over from England in order to preside over the 1906 session of the organization to be held in Calcutta. The great personal influence of 'the Grand Old Man of India' sufficed to maintain the unity of the Congress for some time, but it was not

without making large concessions to the wishes of the Extremists.

There was a curious mingling of old ways and new at the 1906 session of the Congress. Naoroji proclaimed the Congress ideal to be 'Self-Government or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies',[67] and the ideal of *Swaraj* emerged as the one main and comprehensive object. Naoroji demanded it as the birthright of Indians as British citizens. 'I say we are British citizens and are entitled to and claim all British citizens' rights. ... This birthright to be "free" or to have freedom is our right from the very beginning of our connection with England when we came under the British flag. When Bombay was acquired as the very first territorial possession, the government of the day in the very first grant of territorial rights to the East India Company [24 March 1669] declared thus: "And it is declared that all persons being His Majesty's subjects inhabiting within the said Island and their children and their posterity born within the limits thereof shall be declared free denizens and natural subjects as if living and born in England".'[68] This declaration of the rights of Indians as British citizens, Naoroji added, had been reinforced by latter-day pledges, chief among which was the Queen's proclamation of 1858 which read: 'We hold ourselves bound to the natives of our Indian territories by the same obligations of duty which bind us to all our other subjects, and these obligations, by the blessing of Almighty God, we shall faithfully and conscientiously fulfil.'[69] Naoroji was basing his claim on documents which had no legal validity, but what is significant is the fact that he claimed a British constitutional right instead of appealing to the French revolutionary doctrine of the inherent and inalienable right of all men to be free.[70]

By a formal resolution the Calcutta Congress expressed its opinion 'that the system of Government in the self-governing British Colonies should be extended to India' and urged the immediate adoption of certain reforms as 'steps leading to it'.[71]

Soon after the Calcutta session of the Congress Gokhale undertook a tour of northern India in order to combat the influence of the dangerous doctrines preached by the Extremists. In a speech at Allahabad on 4 February 1907 he stated frankly and fully the creed of the Moderates. He recognized, he said on the occasion, no limits to his aspirations for his motherland. He wanted his people to rise to the full stature of their manhood and be in their country what other people were in theirs. He aspired to see his country take her proper place among the great nations of the world. But he felt convinced that the whole of this aspiration, in its essence and in its reality, could be realized within the British empire. 'The cases of the French in Canada and the Boers in South Africa showed', Gokhale remarked, 'that there was room in the Empire for a self-respecting India.' It was not a question, he said, 'of what was theoretically perfect, but of what was practically attainable'. While working for the achievement of self-government within the British empire, they were trying to advance along lines which were well understood and which involved 'a minimum of distrurbance of existing ideas'. They would have in such an advance the sympathy and support of much that was high-minded, freedom-loving and honourable in England. Gokhale asserted that, despite occasional lapses and reactions, 'the genius of the British people, as revealed in history, on the whole, made for political freedom, for constitutional liberty', and that it would be folly and madness on the part of Indians to throw away this great asset in the struggle that lay before them. He deprecated the cry that constitutional agitation had failed while they had not yet exhausted a thousandth part of its possibilities. While he recognized that nine-tenths of their work had to be done by them in India, Gokhale insisted on keeping in touch with 'British democracy', for it could be of valuable assistance to them in checking official retrogression and promoting nation-building.

He condemned the doctrine of passive resistance and all-round boycott preached by the Extremists not only because he thought it to be impracticable and injurious, but also because he saw in it an 'attempt to shift the foundations of their public life'. He pointed out that nation-building was nowhere an easy task and that in India it was beset with difficulties which were truly formidable. He warned his countrymen of the long and weary struggle that lay before them and of the dangers of undue impatience. Gokhale concluded on a note which, for all its wisdom and sincerity, showed that the Moderates were fighting a losing battle. 'Let us not forget', he said, 'that we are at a stage of the country's progress when our achievements are bound to be small, and our disappointments frequent and trying. ... It will, no doubt, be given to our countrymen of future generations to serve India by their successes; we of the present generation, must be content to serve her mainly by our failures.'[72]

But the young were impatient, heedless of obstacles, and careless as to methods. They were no longer in a mood to serve India by their failures. Their attacks on the Moderate leaders and the authorities grew increasingly bitter and strident. The Moderates judged correctly that the Extremist heresy was not yet widespread. They decided to coerce the Extremists into submission or to eject them from the Congress. They shifted the venue of the forthcoming session of the Congress in December 1907 from Nagpur, where it was likely to be flooded with the followers of Tilak, to Surat, which was Pherozeshah Mehta's pocket borough. They managed to get a Moderate Bengali, Rash Behari Ghose, elected as president of the session. Finally, to force a few Extremists who had openly preached the doctrine of complete independence and all-round boycott, out of the Congress, they decided to impose a new constitution on the organization which required every delegate to the Congress session to subscribe to the ideal of self-government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British empire, to be attained by strictly constitutional means.

Amidst all the dust and the din of the controversy about the Surat split—the clash of personalities, the charges and countercharges of irregularities and backslidings, of obduracy and responsibility for hurling the 'Mahratta shoe'—it is easy to discern two points of cardinal importance which divided the two sections in the Congress. Some of the Extremists, led by Aurobindo Ghose, already stood committed to the ideal of absolute autonomy and complete self-government. The attempt to confine the membership of the Congress only to those who definitely and openly subscribed to the ideal of self-government within the British empire was interpreted by them as a clever move designed to eliminate them from the organization. The second major difference was over the methods. The Congress at its Calcutta session in 1906 had given its approval to the campaign for the boycott of British goods as a temporary measure intended to put pressure on the British government and draw its attention to the grievance about the partition of Bengal. The Extremists interpreted 'boycott' in the widest possible sense. To them it was complete Irish Sinn Fein—a boycott not only of British goods, but of everything connected with the British administration. To yield to the Extremists on these two points—the creed and the methods—would have meant handing over the Congress to them. If the Congress were to remain a loyal, moderate and respectable organization, it could not shelter under its wings those who stood for 'absolute *Swaraj*' outside the British empire and preached non-co-operation with the government. The Congress had so far endeavoured to work for national advance in association with the British rulers. It was convinced that there was no alternative to the British Raj in India, except chaos. Though disappointed of the British bureaucracy, it still retained its faith in the British democracy. The Moderates felt that the Extremists were not only

challenging the very bases of older thought and belief, but endangering national progress itself. They decided, therefore, either to bridle the Extremists, or, if they proved recalcitrant, to disown them. Some youthful Extremists, headed by Aurobindo Ghose, decided to wreck the organization instead of being driven out of it.[73] The result was the Surat episode.

The Congress, however, did not dissolve in chaos at Surat. Soon after the disorderly scenes of the second day of the session, 27 December 1907, the older Moderate leaders, P.M. Mehta, D.E. Wacha, G.K. Gokhale, R.B. Ghose, V.K. Iyer, M.M. Malaviya and others, met in private and drew up a notice calling a National Convntion to meet the next day, 28 December, of all those delegates who subscribed to the ideal of self-government for India on the colonial model and its attainment by strictly constitutional means. Over 900 delegates, out of the 1,600 who had come to Surat, attended the Convention, which appointed a committee to draw up a constitution for the Congress.[74] This 'Convention Committee' met at Allahabad on 18-19 April 1908 and framed a constitution for the Congress, as also a set of rules for the conduct of its meetings. Article I of the new constitution enunciated the creed of the Congress. It read: 'The Objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing Members of the British Empire, and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members. These Objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organizing the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.'[75] Article II required every delegate to the Congress to express in writing his acceptance of this creed.[76]

The *Bande Mataram,* the organ of the Bengali Extremists, in its issue of 23 April 1908, accused the Convention of having betrayed 'the mandate of the counry and the future of their people'. It condemned the Moderates as 'advocates of contradiction', 'servants of the alien bureaucrat disguised as patriots', 'foes of Indian indpendence', timid men who had 'refused to serve the Mother with an undivided heart' and 'placed the alien on the throne of her future and dared to think that she would accept a left hand and inferior chair at the side of his seat of empire'.[77] Again on 3 May 1908 it denounced the ideal adopted by the Convention as a denial of India's birthright, her individuality, her past and her independent future, an attempt to maintain India in 'the position of a subordinate satellite in a foreign system'.[78]

Though the Moderates succeeded in driving out the Extremists and in retaining their hold over the Congress for a few more years, they knew that a large part of the country's politically-minded population sympathized with the Extremists. As Gokhale wrote to Mrs Annie Besant in January 1915: 'The two parties are not evenly matched. There is naturally a great volume of anti-foreign feeling—expressed or unexpressed—in the country and it loads the scales heavily on Tilak's side. We have to ask our countrymen to be reconciled to foreign domination—even though it be a transitional arrangement—and our propaganda has to rest on one of its sides on some measure of faith in the sense of justice of British democracy. Tilak has no difficulty in ridiculing the latter as "mendicancy" and denouncing the former as pusillanimous and unpatriotic cringing to the authorities. The number of men who can form a sound political judgement in the country is not large. But you can find any number of unthinking men, filled with an honest but vague longing for the emancipation of the country, ready to follow any plausible leaders, whom in their heart of hearts, they believe to be wholly "against the foreigner". It was with the help of such a following that Tilak captured the Poona Sarvajanik

Sabha, the work of Ranade's hands—and destroyed its usefulness in less than twelve months (the Government placing it under a ban owing to its excesses). It was with the help of such a following that he nearly wrecked the Congress at Poona in 1895. And finally it was with the help of such a following that he actually wrecked the Congress at Surat in 1907.'[79]

The *Indian Social Reformer,* 5 May 1907, however, asserted that the main reason why the Extremist fancies were gaining ground more rapidly among the younger generation of Indians than the weighty counsels of the Moderates was that the Moderate programme made 'little or no demand for sacrifice from its advocates and supporters'. The paper added: 'Ease does not possess for the human mind any fascination whatever. It is comfortable, but the minds which rest in the comfortable belong to faded natures lacking in sensibility. ... Bravery attracts humanity, even if it is limited to words. ... Why do the wise, sensible, moderate utterances of our leaders fall comparatively flat on younger minds? Because they do not make any demand on chivalry and the burning instinct of self-sacrifice in youthful natures. The Moderate programme is too comfortable to fascinate fresh and energetic natures.'[80]

It was argued earlier in this chapter that had Gladstone succeeded in his efforts to grant Home Rule to Ireland in 1886 or in 1893, Indian nationalists would have immediately inscribed Home Rule for India on their banner. When ultimately the Congress did declare itself for a set ideal at the turn of the century, it opted for self-government for India on the colonial model. There were, however, some Indian nationalists, particularly those of the Extremist persuasion, who disliked the ideal of self-government on the colonial model as being something less than complete independence. There were others who felt that the model was not suited to India because India was not strictly speaking a British colony.[81]

Developments in Ireland continued to influence the course of Indian nationalism. The Irish Sinn Fein movement had a profound impact on the nationalist movement in India from 1905 onwards. Early in the twentieth century the demand for Home Rule was again raised in Ireland by moderate, constitutional nationalists, led by John Redmond. Redmond succeeded in uniting the Irish Parliamentary Party under his leadership almost as effectively as Charles Stewart Parnell had done in the 1880s, and forced the Asquith government to attend to the Irish question. Redmond was not a separationist. 'Our demand for Home Rule', he insisted, 'does not mean that we want to break up the British Empire. We are entirely loyal to the Empire as such, and we desire to strengthen the Imperial bonds through a liberal system of government.'[82] In May 1912 an Irish Home Rule Bill was passed by the British House of Commons. It provided for an Irish House of Commons of 164 and an Irish Senate of 40, with a separate Irish executive, but retained 42 seats for Irish members in the British House of Commons. The Bill aroused fierce opposition in Northern Ireland and the Lords threw it out in January 1913. Under the terms of the Parliament Act of 1911 the delaying powers of the Lords could prevent the Bill becoming law only until 1914. In September 1914 the Irish Home Rule Act finally received the royal assent. Its operation was, however, postponed until the end of the war by the simultaneous passage of a Suspensory Act.

The grant of Home Rule to Ireland, with its emphasis on internal self-government and the maintenance of the union, made Home Rule a respectable phrase. It was probably no accident that it was a British woman of Irish extraction who had settled in India—Mrs Annie Besant—who first perceived the political potential of the demand for Home Rule for India.

Political life in India between the inauguration of the Morley-Minto reforms in 1909 and the outbreak of the war in 1914 was rather dull. The nationalist movement had been weakened

by disagreements over goals and methods, by the split in the Congress, by British repression, by the political inacitivity of many regions and sections, and by the lack of co-ordination of those regions and sections which showed signs of activity. The Congress was firmly in the control of the Moderates. It had become a respectablc organization and had won some recognition of the alicn government, but it had ceased to be representative and lost the affections of the Indian people. The Extremists stood aloof from it. Voluntary exile or imprisonment had dcprived them of effective leadership. They had neither the will, nor perhaps the means, to form a separate organization of their own. They were in fact anxious to return to the Congress fold, but were unwilling to do so on the terms which Moderate leaders tried to impose on them. B.G. Tilak was released from prison in June 1914. He was now a far more cautious man than before. Lord Hardinge, who succeeded Lord Minto as viceroy in 1910, had tried thc policy of conciliation and he had succeeded where many of his more illustrious predecessors had failcd. The revocation of the partition had healed a running sore. But the politically-conscious sections in India, in whose mcntality the Extremist agitation of 1905-8 had worked a lasting change, were disappointed with the inactivity of the Congress and were anxious that it should become united and active again.

The war gave rise to a strange sort of double patriotism in India, somewhat similar to that in the white dominions. It evoked loyalty to Great Britain and heightened the sense of imperial unity, but it had an even more pronounced effect in developing a strong national consciousness. At first the twin sentiments of imperialism and nationalism went happily together, but as the war became prolonged the nationalist feeling asserted itself as the stronger, more confident and more articulate.

Mrs Annie Besant had dabbled in turn in Free Thought, Radicalism, Fabianism, and Theosophy. She came to India in 1893 to join in the work of the Theosophical Society. She had a commanding personality and was an eloquent orator. She was sixty-seven years old in 1914 when she began taking an active interest in the politics of the Indian National Congress. On 2 January 1914 she started a weekly paper *Commonweal* from Adyar (Madras) and on 1 August 1914 a daily called *New India.* Her main objects were to stir the Congress into activity, particularly by bringing about a union betwen the Moderates and the Extremists; to popularize the doctrine of self-government; and to promote friendship between Britain and India.

Mrs Besant gave India no new political doctrine, but she did supply her with a new political slogan. She hereself explained why she chose the new slogan of 'Home Rule'. 'I uscd the words "Home Rule" instead of self-government. The first is shorter: self-government is four syllables and Home Rule only two. For a popular cry a short name is better than a long one. Moreover, it was a more explicit phrase, because self-government might mean independence, and so, to show you did not mean a break between Great Britain and India, it was necessary to add "within the Empire", and so you have a great mouthful "self-government within the Empire on Colonial lines". I prefer to call it Home Rule. The advantage is that it is a cry for freedom without separation.'[83]

In a lecture at Poona on 24 September 1916 N.C. Kelkar explained why the term Home Rule had been chosen by Indian nationalists to express their ultimate ideal. He referred to the fact that early Irish nationalists, considering the union with Britain to be a great wrong, had demanded its repeal and how Isaac Butt had hit upon the phrase Home Rule, which 'reconciled freedom with no separation'. He quoted the words of Butt himself that Home Rule 'cut assunder a chain of slavery and allowed independence without provoking separation', and that

it 'neither reversed the past nor compromised the future'. 'In India too', Kelkar went on to argue, 'the term Home Rule serves a useful purpose. For while it excludes the policy of separation ... it elevates to the proper pedestal the policy of India being governed for Indians and by Indians ... .' The ideal of Home Rule had been adopted in India, he added, because it 'briefly and beautifully expressed the subject matter of the claim for self-government within the Empire'; it was familiar to the English ear and saved them from all the imaginary terrors which the *swadeshi* word *swarajya* was likely to conjure up in their minds.[84]

Mrs Besant was encouraged to try for a reunion of the Moderates and the Extremists by a statement made by Tilak soon after the outbreak of the war in which he said, among other things, that he and his followers were 'trying in India, as the Irish Home Rulers have been doing in Ireland, for a reform of the system of administration and not for the overthrow of Government'.[85] She travelled to Poona in early December 1914 and had talks with Gokhale and Tilak. Her efforts to bring about a renuion of the Moderates and the Extremists were, however, frustrated for the time being by the fear of the Moderate leaders, notably P.M. Mehta, that a united Congress would be dominated by the Extremists.[86] The attitude of the Moderate leaders compelled Mrs Besant and Tilak to think in terms of organizing Home Rule Leagues in order to bring pressure to bear on the former to re-admit the Extremists into the Congress and to intensify the Indian demand for internal self-government.

On 25 September 1915 Mrs Besant announced her decision to start a Home Rule League with the single object of securing 'Home Rule for India'.[87] She envisaged a network of branches of the League to carry on agitation throughout the country. The League was to be an auxiliary to the Congress. She arranged to hold a conference in Bombay at the end of December 1915, concurrently with the annual session of the Congress, before launching the League. She hoped to obtain the support of at least some Congress leaders for her project.

Though Gokhale and Mehta had died before the Congress assembled at Bombay in late December 1915, the remaining Moderate leaders outmanoeuvred Mrs Besant and frustrated her attempt to get the Congress committed to Home Rule. But her efforts were not entirely in vain. The Bombay Congress passed a resolution allowing any association of at least two years' standing, which accepted the first article of the Congress constitution and made it a condition for membership, to convene a public meeting and elect up to fifteen delegates to the annual session of the Congress.[88] The Bombay Congress also instructed the All-India Congress Committee to draw up by 1 September 1916 a scheme of reforms demanding popular control over the executive.[89] The Moderate leaders had hoped to subvert Mrs Besant's programme by first appropriating it to the Congress and then allowing it to drop. Mrs Besant saw through them, however, and announced that if the Congress failed to frame a scheme of self-government for India by 1 September 1916 she would be forced to launch her League even without its blessings.

While Mrs Besant felt bound by her pledge to the Moderate leaders, Tilak was under no such constraints. In late April 1916 he called a conference of the Extremists from Maharashtra, the Central Provinces and Berar at Belgaum. The conference took two important decisions, namely, that the Extremists should re-enter the Congress and that an Indian Home Rule League should be organized in order 'to attain Home Rule or Self-Government for India within the British Empire by all constitutional means', and 'to educate and organize public opinion in the country towards the attainment of the same'.[90]

The All-India Congress Committee having failed to produce the scheme of reforms by 1 September 1916, Mrs Besant launched her All-India Home Rule League (later called the National Home Rule League) on 3 September 1916.[91]

The two Home Rule Leagues tried to establish branches and very soon almost every major town in India was covered. They initiated an intensive campaign of propaganda through the press, public meetings and lectures, and through the distribution of handbills and pamphlets. They had regular members. Though they worked in co-operation with each other, they retained their separate organizations. While Tilak's Home Rule League confined its operations to Maharashtra and Karnataka where it had an assured following, Mrs Besant's League worked in the rest of the country. The Home Rulers (as members of the Home Rule Leagues were called) assembled in large numbers at the Lucknow Congress in late December 1916 which marked the re-entry of the Extremists into the Congress and a *rapprochement* between the Congress and the Muslim League.

The Home Rulers demanded self-government for India while retaining the British connexion. They wanted the management of their country's internal affairs to be in their hands, as in the dominions, or as had recently been admitted for Ireland. Though they demanded Home Rule as the birthright of the Indian people, the Home Rulers were emphatic in their assertion that they did not repudiate the sovereignty of the Emperor or the rule of the British people. As Tilak observed: 'It is an undisputed fact that we should secure our own good under the rule of the English people themselves, under the supervision of the English nation, with the help of the English nation, through the English nation, through their sympathy, through their anxious care and through those high sentiments which they possessed.'[92] He compared the Emperor and the British government to *Brahma*—the invisible, the absolute, without attributes and form—and the bureaucracy in India to *Maya*—the visible and the changeable. Home Rule, he said, did not affect the Emperor and the English sovereignty, 'the invisible government'; it only affected 'the visible government', the administration in India. Indians wanted the Emperor and the British government, but they desired that the administration in India should be entrusted to them. 'From the Emperor's point of view there is neither anarchy, nor want of loyalty, nor sedition in this,' he added.[93] In another speech at Ahmednagar on 31 May 1916 he said: 'We want the rule of the English which is over us. But we do not want these intervening middlemen.'[94] The middlemen, according to him, were the members of the British bureaucracy in India. He compared them to the priests of the deity and remarked that they wanted the deity, that is the Emperor, but not those priests. 'We say, appoint other priests from amongst us.'[95] Nor was Tilak in favour of complete Home Rule at once. All that he wanted was 'a real beginning' and the goal to be reached within a fixed period of time.[96] 'Hope', he said, quoting the *Mahabharata,* should be made dependent upon time.'[97]

The Home Rulers only claimed a right to control the internal administration of their country. Defence, foreign affairs and other external and imperial matters they were content to leave in the hands of Great Britain or any other imperial organization which might be set up after the war.[98] But they demanded for India a position of equality with the dominions in the intra-imperial sphere. 'The true Home Ruler', B.C. Pal remarked, 'is above all else a Unionist and Imperialist, in the highest and truest sense of these terms. He is what the late W.T. Stead described ... "a Nationalist Imperialist"'.[99] There was a good deal of talk during the war of imperial reorganization which would enable the dominions to share with Great Britain the burden of governing the empire. This provided the Home Rulers with another argument for the

early grant of self-government to India. Home Rule, it came to be asserted, was the remedy not only for all the ills of the country, but also an urgent necessity in order that India might avoid the more galling and irksome burden of domination by the colonials.

The Home Rule Leagues appealed not only to English-educated Indians but also to mass groups and they presented a formidable challenge to the British authorities. In the words of an official report from Madras, dated 28 December 1916: 'While Mrs. Besant and her lieutenants pay particular attention to the student class, there are indications of the initiation of a special campaign for village work based mainly on the distribution of vernacular pamphlets and the itineration of Home Rule preachers. Hitherto the district reports have for the most part pictured the Home Rule movement as confined to younger vakils and students in central towns. But in the report from Guntur district for the past fortnight the Collector lays stress upon the activities of the League in the delta villages of the Tesali taluk. *New India,* he writes, owing to its cheapness, has a very wide circulation in rural areas generally and the fact, in his opinion, is giving the Home Rule movement a marked impetus among English-knowing people of all classes; the paper has a specially large circulation in the lower ranks of Government service.'[100] The home member of the government of India wrote on 17 January 1917: 'The position is one of great difficulty. The moderate leaders can command no support among the vocal classes who are being led at the heels of Tilak and Besant.'[101]

In March 1917 the government of India issued a circular letter to the local governments outlining the policy to be pursued with regard to the Home Rule movement. In cases where the law had been transgressed, prosecutions were to be launched without any hesitation. Students were to be prohibited from attending meetings where Home Rule was likely to be discussed. 'It is scarcely necessary to state that neither the reforms recommended by the Government of India, nor any reforms which His Majesty's Government are likely to approve, can bear resemblance to the extravagant demands for the grant of early Home Rule to India, which the agitators of the Home Rule Leagues present to their deluded audiences. It is evident therefore that the wilder the hopes that are excited by the Home Rule organizations ... the greater will be the disappointment and the more violent the protests when the actual reforms that may be approved by His Majesty's Government come in due course to be promulgated.' The letter advised the local governments: 'In these circumstances, it is most important that the several Local Governments should take steps to check these extravagant expectations which have been engendered by the Home Rule agitation ... it seems desirable that the Local Governments should, through their experienced officers, point out to all Indians who are likely to listen to reason that any thought of early Home Rule should be put entirely out of mind. They should warn all men of light and leading and all those who have hereditary influence over the people at large to dissociate themselves from the Home Rule campaign as it is at present being conducted... .'[102]

In apprising the secretary of state for India, the viceroy suggested to him the need for a declaration of British policy. 'Mrs. Besant, Tilak and others,' he wrote 'are fomenting with great vigour the agitation for immediate Home Rule, and in the absence of any definite announcement by the Government of India as to their policy in the matter; it is attracting many of those who hitherto have held less advanced views. ... the agitation is having a mischievous effect on public feeling throughout the country ... . Consistent and malicious attacks on the system and methods of present administration are aggravating the danger.'[103]

In July 1916 Tilak was tried for making speeches demanding Home Rule for India. He was ordered to furnish a personal bond of Rs 20,000 and two securities of Rs 10,000 each and to be of good behaviour for a period of one year. But the Bombay high court set aside the order against Tilak. About the same time a security of Rs 2,000 was demanded of *New India.* This security was forfeited on 28 August 1916 and a new security of Rs 10,000 was demanded. Mrs Besant appealed to the Madras high court against the orders of the local government, but her appeal was rejected. In June 1917 the government of Madras interned Mrs Besant, together with her colleagues G.S. Arundale and B.P. Wadia. This was the signal for a country-wide outcry. Instead of crushing the movement, as the government had obviously hoped, the internment of Mrs Besant and her colleagues provided a powerful impetus to it. Many leading Indians, including the Moderates, who had so far held aloof from her Home Rule League now joined it and its membership doubled. The government's action was condemned by all sections of Indian public opinion. The younger men sought guidance from Tilak and Gandhi for a campaign of passive resistance. Montagu's announcement of August 1917 and the release of Mrs Besant in September lowered the political temperature in India a little.

Mrs Besant's popularity was at its height in India in 1917. It seemed as if she had the national movement at her feet. She was elected president of the Congress session in Calcutta at the end of 1917. But during 1918 she isolated herself from several groups which she had helped to bring together, and lost all claims to the leadership of the Indian national movement. In 1917 she had favoured a programme of passive resistance against the government. In 1918 she renewed these suggestions, but she soon realized that she was playing with fire and withdrew them. Indeed, throughout 1918 she blew hot and cold on the question of opposing the government, thereby alienating the Home Rulers who had hitherto looked to her for leadership. When the Montagu-Chelmsford reform proposals were announced in July 1918, Mrs Besant denounced them as 'unworthy to be offered by England or to be accepted by India', but later she became their supporter.[104] It was to Gandhi that many Home Rulers turned for a plan of action. Gandhi not only inherited the mantle which Mrs Besant refused to don, he also found the network of branches established by the Home Rule Leagues valuable links in the communication of his plans to various parts of the country. The Home Rule Leagues thus provided 'an important grid of connexions for relaying Gandhi's message and arousing support for his proposals'.[105]

The Home Rule Leagues made a significant impact on the national movement in India. For the first time—in 1916-18—agitation had been aroused on a nation-wide scale and a network of political committees covered much of India. They provided the country with a simple and forceful demand, imparted a sense of impatience to the national movement as a whole, introduced a new style of political agitation in India, and mobilized the support of new regions and sections of the population. As Judith M. Brown rightly observes: 'The Home Rule Leagues began in halting fashion what Gandhi was later to do boldly and with far greater success. They formulated techniques which he developed, and began to till the ground in areas where he was to reap a great harvest of support. Their activities were a hint that there might soon be an end to the politics of studied limitation. Some of the politicians at least had realized that if they were to succeed in gaining the raj's consent to anything beyond the very limited demands they had so far made they would have to expand their range of support, and in order to do so they would have to evolve a new political style.'[106]

By threatening simultaneously the Moderate supremacy in the Congress and the British supremacy in India, the Home Rulers contributed, however unwittingly, towards the Moderates and the British being drawn closer to each other. In order to appreciate fully the nature and significance of this development, it is necessary to review the course of British policy towards the Congress since its inception.

In a departmental note prepared by the India Office in early 1906, probably for the benefit of the new Liberal secretary of state, John Morley, it was claimed that 'So far as is known here, the Government of India have from the first taken little notice of the Congress movement ... .'[107] This was not entirely correct. As pointed out in the first chapter of this work, Lord Dufferin first encouraged the Congress and then turned against it, or as Hume told Ripon, 'after professing sympathy with the Congress [he] at the last moment spat in our faces and bolted'.[108] Dufferin's earlier sympathetic attitude towards the Congress was in line with that of the Liberal secretary of state, Lord Kimberley, who had written to him on 22 April 1886: 'I have no faith in a mere repressive policy. Apart from all other objections, sentimental or practical, the English democracy will never allow such a policy to be firmly and continuously pursued. ... We must go forward; to stand still and simply resist is not in our power, even if we were convinced it would be the safest course. The conclusion, therefore, at which I arrive is that *some* concessions to this native movement will have to be made, but I would use the utmost caution in making them, not going an inch beyond the necessity of the case, and, above all, carefully avoiding everything which might tend to fan the flame.'[109]

Dufferin's early lead was followed by the provincial governors. Lord Reay, the governor of Bombay, and Lord Connemara, the governor of Madras, were initially benevolently neutral, if not openly sympathetic.[110] Ordinary Britons in India—official or non-official—could not be expected to like a movement which challenged their monopoly of place and power in the country, but most of them had the good sense to adjust themselves to it, some thinking that it was dangerous but not bad,[111] while others—and they were more numerous—thinking that it was bad but not yet dangerous.

Even when Dufferin turned against the Congress, he hesitated to suppress it for fear of public opinion in England.[112] If he had succeeded in reforming the provincial legislative councils, he might have yielded to the pressure of some of his subordinate officials, like Auckland Colvin, and banned the Congress,[113] but Salisbury and Cross did not allow him to reform the councils. In the circumstances, Dufferin publicly condemned the Congress, but let it be. He, however, encouraged the more conservative elements of Indian society—notably the Muslims and the landed aristocracy—to counter the claim of the Congress to speak on behalf of India. He discouraged the princes from contributing to its funds. He also prohibited government servants from taking any active part in it. In November 1887, the government of India added an intelligence department, called the Special Branch, to the department for the suppression of *thagi* and *dakaiti* to watch religious, social and political movements. But while doing all this, Dufferin kept on insisting with the home government that the provincial councils be reformed so as to provide the government with means of ascertaining Indian opinion and satisfying the moderate elements in Indian society.[114]

Dufferin's successor in the viceroyalty, Lord Lansdowne, was initially inclined to be just and tolerant towards the Congress. He made it known that he regarded it 'as a perfectly legitimate movement representative in India of what in Europe would be called the more advanced liberal party'.[115] He assured it of the neutrality of the government. He clarified a

previous order of the government prohibiting government servants from attending the Congress and ruled that while active participation in political activities was forbidden, there was no ban on public servants being present at political gatherings.[116] He told the secretary of state, Cross, that 'With a free Press and right of public meeting, we shall always have some organisation of this kind to deal with. I doubt whether it could, upon the whole, assume a more innocuous shape than that which it now takes. So long as it is allowed to hold its meetings under the nose of the Government of India and so long as these meetings are frequented by Members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, Judges of High Court and other functionaries of position, it is useless either to ignore its existence or to endeavour to procure its suppression by indirect methods. Nothing will serve to keep the movement alive as exhibitions of hostility or timidity on the part of the Government of India.'[117] He also pointed out that though in 'its earlier days it was, directly or indirectly, answerable for several dangerous publications, ... it has of late been reasonable and moderate in its tone, and ... most of its proposals have reference to questions which have at one time or another been treated by the Government of India as subjects of open discussion.'[118] Lansdowne was not opposed to the election of Congressmen to the councils, for he thought 'that it is a distinct advantage that politicians of the type of Surendranath Banerjea should find their way into the reconstituted Councils. They can do as much harm outside the Councils as they can inside them, and their presence in the Councils will have the effect of considerably discounting external agitation.'[119] The reformed councils would, he believed, enable the large majority of Congress leaders 'to shake themselves clear of Mr. Hume and all his works'.[120] The government could then treat the academic discussions of the Congress with good humoured indifference, while making sure that its adherents in the country were keeping within proper limits.[121] In the last couple of years of his viceroyalty, however, Lansdowne was inclined to take a more alarmist view of the Congress, especially as regards the association of some of its members with the anti-cow-killing agitation.[122] He had to be dissuaded by Cross from taking action against Hume for his allegedly seditious circular of early 1892.[123] He also resorted to the traditional policy of strengthening the conservative, landed classes as against the educated middle classes.[124]

Lord Elgin, who was a Liberal, was 'not afraid of cultivating friendly relations with the Congress'.[125] He was inclined to think that 'though Congressmen might be discontented, they were not disloyal', and he did not find in them 'much trace of a desire to substitute for a British authority a native, far less another foreign rule'.[126] He rejected the suggestion of his advisers to declare the Congress unlawful or prohibit it.[127] He believed that Congress leaders were 'men of intelligence' whose proper place was in the legislative councils.[128] His own experience was 'that the leading men ... of the Congress party, when brought face to face with practical administration, whether in the form of legislation or otherwise, are more disposed to deal with it reasonably than demagogues further west'.[129] Even the Tory secretary of state, Lord George Hamilton, who often complained of the lack of active loyalty in India and despaired of the future of the British Raj, looked upon 'the Congress movement as an uprising of Indian Native opinion against, not British rule, but Anglo-Indian bureaucracy'.[130] He, too, favoured the admission of qualified Congressmen to the legislative councils, for, as he wrote to Elgin on 14 May 1897: 'If they are in earnest, contact with administrative difficulties and realities is certain to sober their previous speculations, and, on the other hand, if they be dishonest and unreal they are likely to be detected and exposed.'[131]

Elgin was not only required to work for the best part of his viceroyalty with a Tory secretary of state in England, he had also to deal with a difficult situation in India. While he withstood pressure from home and from his local officials for curbing the freedom of the Indian press, he amended the Indian penal code on 18 February 1898 so as to tighten the sedition law as defined in section 505 of that code. He persuaded himself to believe that 'in the country under the rule of men of different nationality, it was impossible to concede the same liberty of action to educated persons and that political societies and movements which elsewhere might have been treated with forbearance would have to be put under some restraint in India'.[132]

Lord Curzon followed a policy of studied indifference towards the Congress. He wrote to the governor of Madras, Lord Ampthill, on 15 June 1903: 'I have pursued a definite policy in this respect without deviation since I came to India ... My view of the Congress is that it is a movement with which neither Government nor Government servants, and if so, much less the heads of Government, should feel or show any sympathy. In so far as it is innocent, it is superfluous: and in so far as it is hostile to Government or seditious, it is a national danger. My policy ever since I came to India has been to reduce the Congress to impotence, (a) by never taking notice of it, (b) by carrying out such reasonable reforms as to deprive it of reasonable ground of complaint, (c) by showing such sympathy and tolerance towards the Natives as to give no excuse to the Congress to revive racial issues, but (d) by never in the smallest degree truckling to its leaders or holding any communion with the unclean thing. Over and over again has the Congress, through its spokesmen, made overtures to me, which I have met with the same polite but frigid indifference.'[133]

Curzon did not think that 'the Congress movement' possessed 'any very strong virility or that its contribution to the public good ... [was] worthy of the labour and outlay that have been expended upon it'.[134] He believed 'that the Congress party are trying to do two incompatible things: to retain the respect and to guide the counsels of the respectable reforming party; and at the same time to keep in with the extreme men, who want something very different. Parnell made the same attempt in Ireland and failed utterly. I do not think the enterprise is likely to be more successful in India.'[135] Curzon even persuaded himself to believe that 'the Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my greatest ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise'.[136] The secretary of state, Hamilton, was equally convinced that, largely due to the policies pursued by Curzon, 'the Congress was losing popularity and influence'.[137]

It was ironical that Curzon himself, by some of his utterances and actions, notably by his partition of Bengal, contributed a good deal to the revival of the Congress. By 1905-6, when Minto became viceroy and Morley secretary of state for India, it was generally recognized in official circles that the Congress had become a force to be reckoned with.[138] It was also apprehended that the Extremists would capture the Congress and radicalize its policies, and that the Muslims might throw in their lot with it against the British.[139] Morley and Minto abandoned the Curzonian policy. Lines of communication were opened with the Moderate sections of the Congress. An attempt was made to rally them against the Extremists. Acting on the principle of 'Order plus Reform', the physical force Extremists were dealt with firmly, while, as a sop to the Moderates, the legislative councils were expanded and liberalized. Indians were admitted to the *arcana imperii*—the council of the secretary of state for India and the executive councils of the governor-general and the governors.[140] The Moderates were invited to come to terms with the government and break away from the Extremists.[141] Indians were to be more closely associated with the tasks of administration and legislation, they were to

be given more opportunities of influencing the government, but they were not yet to govern themselves or to be trained for doing so. The traditional policy of bolstering the conservative elements of Indian society continued to be pursued. The Muslims were encouraged to demand and readily granted separate electorates and weightage in representation. The fear of the Extremists had made the Moderates respectable, but care was taken that they did not benefit overmuch from the reforms.[142]

Crewe and Hardinge no more liked the Congress than did their predecessors, Morley and Minto. They believed that the reformed councils had made the Congress redundant and that it would gradually wither away.[143] The rift between the Moderates and the Extremists and the growing debility of the Moderate–controlled Congress were viewed by them with evident satisfaction.[144] But they were prepared to do business with the Moderate leaders of the Congress and even pretended to be friendly with them. Ignoring the precedent of more than a quarter of a century, they began receiving Congress deputations.[145] Provincial governors even started being present at Congress gatherings in order to lend their moral support to the Moderates against the Extremists.[146] But the distrust of the Congress and Congressmen persisted. In the eyes of many British officials in India there was not much to choose between the Moderates and the Extremists.[147] It was not only Tilak who was considered to be a dangerous man and subjected to police surveillance,[148] Gokhale was treated likewise.[149] Loyalty was equated with the defence of unchallenged perpetual British rule. Hardinge regarded Gokhale as 'a dangerous man, because his disloyalty is only to take effect 20 years hence'.[150] Crewe and Hardinge were as emphatic as Morley and Minto had been that Britain would never grant colonial self-government to India.[151] They opposed the construction of separate buildings for the legislative councils in Delhi and the provincial capitals for fear that they might be looked upon as potential parliaments.[152]

Speaking on the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill in the Lords on 23 February 1909, Morley had remarked that the effect of his reforms had been, was being and would be to persuade those who hoped for 'autonomy or self-government of the colonial species or pattern' in India to give up their dream and be content with admission to co-operation with the British administration.[153] This was mere wishful thinking. Men do not give up their dreams so easily, and national dreams are, perhaps, the most tenacious. The eyes of most educated Indians were now fixed on the future and, despite the assertions of British statesmen to the contrary, they had welcomed the reforms of 1909 as an advance towards parliamentary self-government. Even the Moderates, who stood for co-operation with the British administration, did not consider it to be an end in itself. As was to be expected, Indian nationalists, instead of relinquishing their dream, began persuading the British government to accept it as their own. In July 1911 Gokhale wrote that the political evolution to which Indian reformers looked forward was 'representative Government on democratic basis'. In his view 'the first requisite ... of improved relations between Englishmen and Indians', was 'an unequivocal declaration on England's part of her resolve to help forward the growth of representative institutions in India and a determination to stand by this policy, in spite of all temptations or difficulties'. 'I think the time has come', Gokhale added, 'when a definite pronouncement on this subject should be made by the highest authority entitled to speak in the name of England, and the British Government in India should keep such pronouncement in view in all its actions.'[154]

The immediate reaction of the British government to such pleadings by Moderate Congressmen was a more emphatic reiteration of what William Archer called 'the dogma of

perpetuity'.[155] On two separate occasions in the summer of 1912, Crewe, as secretary of state for India, from his seat in the House of Lords, publicly repudiated the Moderate ideal of colonial self-government for India. 'I say quite frankly', he declared on 24 June 1912, 'that I see no future for India on those lines. I do not believe that the experiment ... of attempting to confer a measure of real self-government, with practical freedom from Parliamentary control, upon a race which is not our own ... is one which could be tried.'[156] Again, on 29 July 1912, referring to the dream of self-government like that of the dominions cherished by some Indians, Crewe remarked: 'I repeat categorically what I said last time, that there is nothing whatever in the teachings of history so far as I know them, or in the present conditions of the world so far as I understand them, which makes the realization of such a dream even remotely possible.' To Crewe the idea of an Indian dominion was 'a world as remote as any Atlantis or Erewhon that ever was thought of by the ingenious brain of an imaginative writer'.[157] He advised Indians to set aside the vision of becoming prime minister of an Indian dominion or commander-in-chief of an Indian army in future years and to settle down to closer co-operation with their western governors.

The impact of the First World War and India's splendid rally to the cause of the British empire persuaded British statesmen to view the problems of her internal development and place in the empire from a changed angle. Indian nationalists did not fail to take advantage of this. The Moderates were anxious that nothing should be done which might embarrass the authorities in any way during the period of the war, but neither did they wish to allow India's case to go by default. Their loyalty was as firm as their patriotism. They stood for a gradual and peaceful advance of India towards self-government, in co-operation with their British rulers. For themselves they believed 'with the fervour of a religious faith' that India would some day achieve her self-government within the empire and that British statesmen would prove true to their traditional genius and recognize India's aspirations as legitimate and worthy of encouragement. But how could they—without appearing ridiculous—avow their faith openly while the solemn disclaimers of Morley and Crewe were fresh in public memory? These disclaimers, the Moderates knew, had made large classes of people in India distrustful of British good intentions and hostile to British rule. Clearly there was need that these unfortunate disclaimers themselves should first be disclaimed. And this, the Moderates felt, could easily be done if the British government made an authoritative and unequivocal declaration that it was their aim and intention to grant India self-government similar to that enjoyed by the dominions in the fullness of time. There was yet another reason why the Moderates considered such a declaration of British policy in India necessary. They were wise and practical-minded enough to realize that the war had given rise to excessive hopes and demands in India which could not be fully satisfied by the reforms likely to be granted by the authorities at the end of the war. Dissatisfaction with post-war reforms might even lead to a recrudescence of serious unrest in the country. But if the British government could be persuaded to avow an intention of leading India to self-government, the differences between the rulers and the ruled would be narrowed down to questions of method and pace of advance. In such a situation it would not be difficult for moderate and reasonable men to throw the weight of their co-operation and influence on the side of the authorities, thus ensuring the peaceful but steady political progress of India.

The desire of the Moderates for a definite statement of British policy in India found earnest expression in the presidential address delivered by Sir Satyendra Prasanno Sinha to the 1915 session of the Congress held at Bombay. Sinha remarked on the occasion that nothing but 'a

rational and inspiring ideal' could 'still the throbbing pain in the soul of awakening India'. After reiterating that self-government within the empire was the goal of Indian nationalism, he went on to appeal to the British people 'to declare their ungrudging approval of the goal to which we aspire, to declare their inflexible resolution to equip India for her journey to that goal and furnish her escort on the long and weary road'. Such a declaration by Britain, Sinha said, would be the most distinguished way of marking her appreciation of India's loyal and generous response to the war; it would touch the heart and appeal to the imagination of Indians far more than any specific political reforms. These latter, he argued, might fall short of the high expectations raised by the utterances of English statesmen as to the future place of India in the empire and cause general disappointment, but an authoritative declaration of Britain's resolve to lead India to self-government would, without causing such disappointment, convince the Indian people that the pace of reforms would be reasonably accelerated and that henceforth it would be only a question of patient preparation. Sinha referred to the 'unhappy statements and even actions of responsible [British] statesmen' in the recent past which had, he said, aroused a widespread suspicion in India that Britain did not contemplate giving India freedom even in the most distant future. He demanded, therefore, 'an authentic and definite proclamation with regard to which there will be no evasion, no misunderstanding possible', 'a frank and full statement of the policy of the Government as regards the future of India, so that hope may come where despair holds sway and faith where doubt spreads its darkening shadow'. And he warned that unless the British government 'steadily, consistently and unflinchingly' adhered to the policy of preparing India for ultimate self-government within the empire 'the moderate party amongst us will soon be depleted of all that is fine and noble in human character'.[158]

That was how Sinha tried to pin down the British nation and government, and tempt them into making a declaration of policy. Lord Chelmsford revealed later that 'the ball was set rolling' by Sinha's remarkable address to the Congress in December 1915. It apparently inspired him—then serving as a territorial officer in the British army in India, but three months later to succeed Hardinge as viceroy—and many others to think about the goal of British policy in India and to realize the need for its announcement.[159]

The significance of the 1915 session of the Congress at Bombay was not immediately appreciated by British officials in India. Writing to Austen Chamberlain, the new secretary of state for India, on 31 December 1915, Hardinge referred to Sinha's 'very moderate presidential speech' and added: 'It will, I believe, result in rallying the moderates and in widening the schism between them and the extremists, and this I regard as a good thing.'[160] But three weeks later he informed the secretary of state 'that the growing ascendancy of the Extremist school and the decline of the influence of the men of the Moderate school of thought and action are two striking developments that have occurred. The citadel of moderation has been successfully attacked in all the directions by the multiplication of the Congress. The door has been opened wide for the admission of Extremists such as Tilak into the Congress, and by the adoption by the Congress of a very radical resolution on the question of self-government the Congress has been converted into an Extremist league. They are likely to give trouble in the future, but at the same time they will lose caste throughout the country, for in spite of all things, moderate views, though less vocal, predominate in India.'[161]

As the Home Rule agitation grew in India in 1916, the Moderates were further weakened and increasingly thrown on the defensive. In their extremity, they and their friends in England renewed their appeals to the British government to come to their rescue at least by a declaration

of British policy in India and some indication of the political reforms which were likely to be introduced in India after the war. On 25 October 1916, 'old Wedderburn, whose Congress eye ... [was still] not dim',[162] wrote to Lord Reay, at one time governor of Bombay, to tell the new secretary of state for India, Austen Chamberlain, with whom he was known to be friendly, that 'the Moderate constitutional party in the Congress is between Scylla and Charybdis: on the one hand the official clique at Simla, which desires to concede nothing, and which apparently without discrimination is employing harsh police repression on all who differ from them ... on the other hand the Extremists who want Home Rule at once. The younger generation are drifting wholesale out of our control, and into the Extremist camp, and at the approaching Congress at Lucknow, it seems likely that we shall have an aggravated form of the Surat struggle, the Moderates will be overwhelmed. The Indian Government will then be brought face to face with angry Extremists under such capable and irreconcilable leaders as Mr. Tilak. It will be a case of an Indian "Sinn Fein" with a population 50 times as large, 6000 miles away. Where shall we be then?'[163] Writing on 21 November 1916 to Charles Roberts, until lately under-secretary of state for India, B.N. Basu, now a member of the India Council, underlined the significance of the Easter rising in Ireland,[164] earlier in the year, and remarked that unless the British government immediately came to the aid of the Moderates in the manner desired, he foresaw 'a larger Ireland in India ... [and] the moderate party being hooted and hissed into obscurity and oblivion'.[165]

Though the viceroy, Chelmsford, and the governor of Bombay, Willingdon, had long been converted to the Moderate point of view, and had been pressing the home government to accede to their demand, the latter failed to move in time.[166] It was already rumoured that the government of India was busy considering a scheme of future reforms, but when Indian members enquired in the imperial legislative council whether it was so, and would the government publish its proposals before final decision was reached, they were told that the government was 'unable to make any statement in the matter'.[167] Anxious lest their case go by default, nineteen non-official members of the imperial legislative council hurriedly put their heads together and produced a memorandum, containing what they called their 'humble suggestions' regarding post-war reforms in India and submitted it to the viceroy in September 1916.[168] On 24 November the government of India, without taking the Indian public into confidence, much less consulting it, forwarded a dispatch to the secretary of state, containing their final proposals for reform, along with the comments of the local governments on them.[169] Its two main features related to the reform of the provincial legislative councils and the declaration of the goal of British rule in India. Aided by the *non possumus* attitude of the home government and the unnecessary reticence of the government of India, and obviously encouraged by such international happenings as the Easter rebellion in Ireland and the declaration of American policy to grant independence to the Philippines,[170] Indian nationalists closed their ranks. Not only did the Extremists re-enter the Congress, before the year 1916 was out the Muslim League had signed a concordat with its old antagonist. Meeting together at Lucknow in the last week of December 1916, the Congress and the League put forward a joint demand that 'the King-Emperor should be pleased to issue a proclamation that it is the aim and intention of British policy to confer self-government on India at an early date', that 'definite steps should be taken towards self-government by granting the reforms contained in the [Congress-League] scheme', and that 'in the reconstruction of the Empire India [should] be lifted from the position of a dependency to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the self-

governing Dominions'. The main reforms demanded by the Congress and the League were provincial autonomy; four-fifths of the central and provincial legislative councils to be elected; not less than half the members of the central and provincial governments to be elected by their respective legislative councils; the executives to be bound to act in accordance with the resolutions passed by their legislative councils unless they were vetoed by the governor-general or governors, in that event, if the resolution were passed again after an interval of not less than one year, it should in any case be put into effect; the relations of the secretary of state with the government of India to be similar to those of the colonial secretary with the dominion governments; and India to have an equal status with the dominions in any body concerned with imperial affairs.[171] In the absence of any alternative proposals on behalf of the government of India, the Congress-League monopolized the political stage in India and opinion began to crystallize fast in its favour.

Writing to the viceroy on 11 January 1917 about the Lucknow Congress, the lieutenant-governor of the United Provinces, James Meston, said that 'the Extremists and Moderates have again joined hands and have achieved the remarkable feat of capturing the advanced Mahomedans. It was a great personal triumph for Tilak, and his enormous popularity as a national hero was apparent at every turn. ... That the domination of the Extremists has been restored, and that there is a complete landslide among the Moderates, is perfectly obvious. Jinnah came to lunch with me at the end of the week, and I had a long talk afterwards. He was perfectly frank about the disappearance of the Moderates; what else could you expect, he asked. The Extremist has a definite programme, impracticable perhaps, but appealing keenly to the pride of the people. The Moderate has no particular creed, except trust in Government. If he goes on the platform and asks his audience to trust Government, they immediately challenge him to tell them what Government is going to do for them. He is unable to reply; Government has not confided its intentions to him; and he is shouted down. The Extremist, on the other hand, is definite, plausible, and unless he breaks the law, there is nothing to show that Government disapproves of his propaganda. ... The vital question for us is, will the Moderates rally to the side of Government and show some political courage and power of resistance, if Government does disclose a policy which can be weighed, article for article, against the manifestos of the Extremists? Many of my Indian friends think that they will, but that no time should be lost in calling upon them. Meanwhile what we have undoubtedly got to face is that the British public and the House of Commons will be told, with every appearance of veracity, that at last the whole political opinion of India—both wings of the Hindus, and all that is vital and progressive among Mahomedans—presents a united front in its demand for reforms. ... The situation is thus, as most of us here see it, one of considerable seriousness... .'[172] Meston had, in a sense, simply reinforced the point Willingdon had been making for quite some time in his communications to the viceroy and the secretary of state, that 'the moderate man, who is the being we have to keep on our side, isn't brave enough to start a general policy of his own, but wants the stiffening of a Government pronouncement to give him courage',[173] but in the qualitatively changed political situation in India after the Lucknow Congress, his message acquired a new significance and urgency. Chelmsford forwarded Meston's letter to the secretary of state, Austen Chamberlain, underlining the point 'that the Extremists are getting the upper hand in the Congress and that nothing short of an announcement of the policy of Government in regard to political advance will enable the moderates to make a stand'.[174] Lord Pentland, the governor of Madras, was already inclined to take the same view,[175] and he was

later joined by his counterpart in Bengal, Lord Ronaldshay.[176] But still the India Office remained unconvinced of the need for a declaration of British policy. It was not until the spring of 1917, when the representatives of India to the Imperial War Conference—S.P. Sinha, the Maharaja of Bikaner and James Meston—personally pleaded with Chamberlain in London that nothing short of self-government in the empire as the goal of British policy would satisfy anyone in India, and that unless a declaration to that effect was soon made by the British government, 'moderate men ... will "go under"',[177] and Sinha and Bikaner threatened to raise the issue in the Imperial War Cabinet, that Chamberlain, rather reluctantly, began 'coming round to [the] view that a statement of our object is necessary'.[178] But the search for a formula and the exact form it should take was inordinately delayed because of the preoccupation of the British cabinet with the war effort and the difference of opinion among its members. The government of India, under pressure from the local governments which were finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the Home Rule agitation, remained insistent. On 18 May 1917 the viceroy telegraphed to the secretary of state requesting an immediate announcement of British policy. He pointed out that the political situation in India had materially altered during the past few months as a result of the revolution in Russia, the publication of statements as to the rights of the peoples to govern themselves, the reception accorded to the representatives of India at the War Conference in England, and India's admission to the Imperial Conference. The absence of any definite announcement of policy was, he wrote, causing embarrassment to the local governments, alienating the moderates, and leaving the field free for the extremist propaganda. The viceroy realized the difficulties of making a declaration of policy while not yet being in a position to state specifically what their proposals for reforms were, but he considered the declaration necessary *'in order to arrest the further defection of moderate opinion'*.[179] The cabinet discussed the matter on 29 June and 5 July, but got bogged down in a fruitless discussion over the meaning of the term 'self-government'. Lord Balfour, in particular, objected to the use of the term 'self-government' in any declaration for the reason that in the mouths of Englishmen it had acquired a definite meaning, namely, a parliamentary form of government, and in his view it was unwise to graft parliamentary democracy on India.[180] The result was that when Austen Chamberlain suddenly resigned on 14 July 1917, over the Mesopotamia affair,[181] the cabinet, even after having discussed the question twice, had failed to reach any decision on the form of the announcement or whether it should be made at all.[182]

In India the political situation had meanwhile become far more difficult for the government. The internment of Mrs Besant in June 1917 had led to a country-wide agitation. The publication of the report of the Mesopotamia Commission at the end of June, containing severe strictures on the government of India for its lack of judgement and administrative efficiency, had dealt another blow to its prestige. The debate in the Commons on the report turned out to be a censure motion on the government of India. E.S. Montagu, in a bitter and impassioned speech, described the government of India as 'too wooden, too iron, too inelastic, too antediluvian'[183] and pleaded for a more responsible and democratic administration. He outlined his vision of future India as 'a series of self-governing provinces and principalities, federated by one central government', and remarked: 'But whatever be the object of your rule in India, the universal demand of those Indians whom I have met and corresponded with is that you should state it.' Montagu went on to say: 'The history of this war shows that you can rely upon the loyalty of the Indian people to the British Empire—if you ever doubted it! If you want to use that loyalty you must take advantage of that love of country which is a religion in India,

and you must give them that bigger opportunity of controlling their destinies, not merely by councils which cannot act, but by control, by growing control, of the executive itself.'[184]

Montagu's speech gladdened the hearts of Indian nationalists. He had ever since his days as the under-secretary of state for India (1910-14) been known for his deep sympathy with Indian national aspirations. And when on 18 July 1917—within a week of his performance in the Mesopotamia debate—Montagu was appointed as Chamberlain's successor at the India Office, the event was widely acclaimed in India and gave rise to excessive expectations. It horrified certain conservative circles in England. Even the sober *Times* called it 'a blunder' and 'an unfortunate selection'.[185] Both this over-optimism and this dislike were to be unfortunate elements in the Indian situation in the years to come.

Indian politicians now became more active than ever before. The central committee of the Congress and the council of the Muslim League met together at Bombay in the last week of July and reiterated their demand that the British government be pledged to the policy of making India a self-governing member of the empire. They also urged the authorities to adopt the Congress-League scheme of post-war reforms, to publish the official proposals for discussion, and to reverse 'the policy of repression'. In order to secure these objectives they decided to send a deputation to England and even threatened to launch a campaign of passive resistance.[186]

Recognizing 'the gravity and urgency of the situation' in India, the viceroy repeatedly impressed upon the secretary of state the view that, whatever be the decision regarding the nature and extent of future reforms, 'it would be fatal to put off any longer an unmistakable declaration in India of our future policy'.[187] Privately, Chelmsford wrote to Montagu on 19 July 1917 'that the sands of time are running out, and each day's delay renders the position more grave',[188] and, again on 7 August 1917: 'I would press on you, if you can do no more, to throw us this crumb [of an announcement of policy].'[189]

Montagu had energetically taken up the threads where Chamberlain had left them. On 30 July 1917, he had circulated a memorandum to the cabinet, drawing its attention to the rapidly deteriorating situation in India and to the increasing insistence of the viceroy and the heads of provincial governments for an immediate announcement of policy.[190] But it was not until a fortnight later that the cabinet could find time to discuss the matter.

Montagu was anxious that any declaration of British policy must include the word 'self-government', not only because it was so current in Indian discussion, but also because he feared that its avoidance might cause dissatisfaction in India and thus defeat the very purpose of making the declaration.[191] The formula which he had suggested to the cabinet in his memorandum of 30 July 1917 was substantially the same as that proposed by Chamberlain. It read: 'His Majestry's Government and the Government of India have in view the gradual development of free institutions in India with a view to ultimate self-government within the Empire.'[192] This, however, did not satisfy Lord Curzon, who like most members of the cabinet disliked the phrase 'self-government'.[193] He devoted a good deal of time and thought to the phraseology of the proposed declaration. In order to make it 'rather safe and certainly nearer to [his] own point of view',[194] he redrafted it as follows on the eve of its publication: 'The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.'[195]

It was this formula which Montagu announced in the Commons on 20 August 1917. He also declared that substantial steps in pursuance of this policy would be taken as soon as possible and that he would be proceeding to India shortly to discuss matters with the government of India and receive representations from Indians. 'I would add', he went on to say, 'that progress in this policy can only be achieved by successive stages. The British Government and the Government of India on whom the responsibility lies for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, must be the judges of the time and measure of each advance, and they must be guided by the co-operation received from those upon whom new opportunities of service will thus be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility.'[196]

The announcement laid down clearly and definitely the ultimate aim of British rule in India. It recognized India to be potentially a dominion. It committed the British government to the policy of introducing parliamentary self-government in India on the English model. It was not only 'the most momentous utterance ever made in India's chequered history',[197] it was also a landmark in British imperial history, for it marked a definite repudiation of the concept of 'the two empires'[198]—the concept that there could be under the British flag, one form of constitutional evolution for the west and another for the east, or one for the white races and another for the non-white. The declaration of 20 August 1917 signified the passing away of the Second British Empire and the beginning of what Zimmern called 'the Third British Empire',[199] the transformation, in principle, of the Empire into a Commonwealth of Nations.

The announcement of 20 August 1917 was universally welcomed in India—by the Moderates more enthusiastically than by the Extremists—not merely because it contained an authoritative declaration of British policy which Indian nationalists had demanded, but more so because the man who made it was considered to be a champion of India's demand for self-government. 'We recognize in him [Montagu], wrote the *Bengalee,* commenting on the announcement, 'the friend of India and of the aspirations for liberty and constitutional freedom, as equal subjects of the Crown, which are now throbbing in our hearts.'[200] The cold and cautious phraseology of the announcement, however, aroused some apprehension and was attributed to the influence of Tories like Curzon and Milner in the cabinet. The claim that the British government and the government of India were to be the sole judges of the time and measure of each advance was resented. It was hoped and asserted, on the contrary, that the people of India should have an effective voice in the matter. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* also demanded that 'a definite declaration of the nature of responsible government proposed to be granted and the time when it may be conferred should ... be made without delay'.[201]

'I went to bed last night', Chamberlain had written to Chelmsford on 16 March 1917, when the announcement was in gestation, 'with my mind full of the Revolution in Russia, of which we had just heard. It is one of those events which, though long discussed and even foretold, take the world none the less by surprise when they happen. Indeed there has been no more portentous or amazing occurrence since the French Revolution, and it is curious to observe how close is the parallel in many respects, both personal and public.'[202] Again, on 29 March 1917, Chamberlain wrote to Chelmsford: 'It is obvious ... that the opinion of the vocal classes in India is moving very fast. ... The politicians of India have found out how to agitate, and there seems to me a singular similarity in the methods, organisation and probably in the origin, of all their agitations. ... The fact is that all the world is in a state of revolution. Let us hope that ours will be a peaceful revolution. But it will be revolution none the less. The ferment of these new ideas

is working everywhere, and in India as much as anywhere. Opinion cannot but be excited by the Russian revolution, by the congratulations showered upon the revolutionaries from England and elsewhere and by the constant appeals to the spirit of liberty and nationality which are the ground-work of most of the public declarations of the time.'[203] Chamberlain's diagnosis was correct, and his expectation was fulfilled. The announcement of 20 August 1917 represented not only a revolution in British imperial thinking about India, it also ushered in a peaceful revolution in India itself.

It was a remarkable achievement on the part of the Moderates in India in 1917 to have converted their British rulers to their own point of view and to have secured from them in wartime such an epoch-making announcement. But the announcement was the result of an unwritten compact between the leading Moderates and the British authorities—both in India and in England—which required that the former, on their part, would distance themselves from the Extremists and oppose their methods and objectives. This aspect of the compact was, as will be seen in chapter six, more clearly spelled out and reaffirmed during Montagu's visit to India in the winter of 1917-18, and it led, almost inevitably, to a formal split in the Congress organization. Thus, paradoxically, the Home Rule movement first united the Congress and then divided it again.

4

Congress Constitution

Probably beeause the founding fathers of the Indian National Congress intended it to be no more than an annual demonstration—and that too of a tentative and temporary eharacter—they launehed it without any written constitution. It was not until its third session at Madras that the question of providing a written eonstitution was diseussed formally for the first time.

On 28 Deeember 1887 T.N. Mitra, a leading lawyer from Caleutta and seeretary of the Indian Union, moved a resolution demanding the appointment of a large and representative eommittee 'to eonsider what rules, if any, may now be usefully framed in regard to the eonstitution and working of the Congress, with instruetions to report thereon to the Congress on the 30th instant'.[1] 'A eonstitutional assembly without a eonstitution', Mitra argued, 'is a sort of misnomer and inconsisteney, and it may be a logieal absurdity. Therefore we ought, it seems to me, to have some rules as to who our delegates are to be, how they are to be eleeted, and how eertified to. We ought to have some rules as to the proeedure to be followed in this assembly, and as to other similar matters. The rules must, of eourse, in the beginning, be very simple indeed, embodying the existing praetiee as far as possible, and giving, as it were the foree of law to eustom. They must not be hard and fast rules that will prematurely bind us down to any speeial seheme; ours is a young and growing institution, and if our eonstitution is really to fit us it must grow with us; but there must be some very simple temporary rules as to the seleetion of delegates and as to the working of the Congress. ... We may avoid, by this, one serious objeetion that has been raised to this National Congress. It has been said that this National Congress is a sort of mutual admiration soeiety, eonsisting of a number of self-eonstituted delegates, eaeh one appointed by himself as his own delegate without any sort of representation whatever. If, by our rules, we ean show to our erities that the men whom we allow to take part in the deliberations of this assembly are, as we all know that they are, men duly eleeted either by publie bodies at general meetings, or by towns or groups of towns at publie meetings, and if we ean thus eonvinee them that the delegates who take part in the deliberations of this great assembly are men who have the eonfidence of important groups of their eountrymen all over this vast empire, shall we not be suffieiently answering our unkindly erities?'[2] Mitra's proposal was supported by two other eminent lawyers—Hamid Ali of Lueknow and W.S. Gantz of Madras.[3]

Opposition to the resolution eame—strangely enough—from three Maharashtrian delegates belonging to the western presideney. R.P. Karandikar, a lawyer from Satara and seeretary of the loeal Sarvajanik Sabha, who tried to move an amendment, argued that it was premature to have

a constitution for the Congress. He insisted that 'we ought to bring the Congress nearer home to the people of ... other presidencies, and to give them an opportunity of witnessing the working of such vast number of delegates as we have before us now; to learn, in fact, the lessons of the Congress by practical personal experience before we ask them, through their representatives, to join us in framing any constitution'.[4] Karandikar was ably supported by two editors—A.R. Joglekar of the *Dharwar Vritta,* Dharwar, and R.M. Sane of the *Dnyan Prakash,* Poona, who emphasized the same point—that in view of the uneven intellectual and political development of the various parts of the country, the Congress must hold its sessions in all the provinces before any attempt was made to have 'uniform constitutional rules'.[5]

The president of the Congress, B. Tyabji, intervened to say that the committee was being appointed only to consider what rules, if any, were necessary to be framed and that the final decision would be taken by the Congress itself. He also explained that all that was intended by a 'constitution' was 'that there should be some rules framed as to who and what the delegates who come up to the next Congress should be; how and when they should be chosen or selected; and which are the provinces or places from which they may be sent ... [and] whether the Congress is to consist of 700, 1,000, 1,500 or 3,000 delegates, or whether there should be no limit at all, and so on.'[6] After the presidential intervention the amendment was withdrawn and the resolution was 'carried unanimously'.[7]

A committee consisting of thirty-five leading Congressmen carefully considered the issue and drafted a set of 'tentative rules in regard to certain matters connected with the Indian National Congress'.[8] Its report, embodying these rules, was presented to the Congress on 30 December 1887 by A.O. Hume, who said: '... it is not proposed to pass these rules or to make them binding upon you on the present occasion. These rules must, we think, stand over for consideration of the next Congress; but, in the meantime, they ought to be circulated to all the standing committees to reconsider, at their leisure, and see how far they are workable. Next year they will be brought up again for final consideration, together with all such emendations and additions as may have, in the meantime, suggested themselves to the several standing committees. The rules, as they stand, practically embody existing practice, if not throughout the country, in one province or another, but an additional year's experience will enable all to judge how far that practice should be accepted, and how far it may advantageously be modified.'[9] He then moved a resolution which read: 'That the rules drafted by the Committee appointed under Resolution I, stand over for consideration till the next Congress, but that in the meantime copies be circulated to all Standing Congress Committees, with the request that they will during the coming year act in accordance with these rules so far as this may seem to them possible and desirable, and report thereon to the next Congress, with such further suggestions as to them may seem meet.'[10] The resolution was seconded by T.N. Mitra and 'carried unanimously'.[11]

As Hume rightly pointed out, the draft constitution of 1887 was in the main an attempt at 'practically embody[ing] existing practice'. Its chief provisions were as follows:

'I. There shall be, yearly, during the last fortnight of each Calendar year, a meeting of the delegates of the people of India which shall bear the name of *The Indian National Congress.*

'II. It shall, from year to year, assemble at such places and on such dates as shall have been resolved on by the last preceding Congress ...

'III. There shall be, as resolved at the 2nd National Congress (XIII of 1886), Standing Congress Committees at all important centres. ... The delegates from any jurisdiction,

attending a Congress, shall form the Standing Congress Committee for the ensuing year, and they shall have power to add to their number, and appoint their own executive. There is at present a General Secretary holding office at the pleasure of the several Congress Committees, but henceforth a General Secretary shall be elected at each Congress for the ensuing year.

'IV. It shall be the primary duty of all Standing Congress Committees to promote the political education of the people of their several jurisdictions throughout the year ...

'V. To enable the several Committees to carry out this great work successfully, they are empowered to create as many Sub-Committees, (to each of whom a definite sphere of action is to be assigned), within their jurisdiction, as may be necessary and possible, and they are further empowered to associate themselves with any existing associations and work with them and through their various branches as Sub-Committees.

'VI. Each year, each Standing Congress Committee shall report fully the work that it has done during the year ... such reports ... shall be laid before the Congress and duly considered thereat.

'VII. It shall be the duty of all Standing Congress Committees, in consultation with their Sub-Committees, and as many of the leading men resident therein as may be possible, to divide their several jurisdictions into such electoral circles as may to them seem to be most likely in the existing state of the country, to secure a fair representation of the intelligent portion of the community, without distinction of creed, race or color. Such circles may be territorial, or where local circumstances require this, may each include one or more castes, or professions, or Associations, of any kind. Except in the case of Associations, all delegates shall be elected at public meetings held for the purpose. In the case of Associations, delegates shall be elected at general meetings specially convened on that behalf.

'VIII. Delegates may be of any creed, caste, or nationality, but must be residents in India, and not less than 25 years of age. ...

'XI. It shall be the duty of each Standing Congress Committee to notify, so that such notification shall reach the Reception Committee on or before the Ist of November, the subjects that the people of their several jurisdictions desire to see discussed. Provided that such subjects shall be of a national character, that is to say, of a nature affecting the whole country, and not provincial, and that in regard to each subject the exact resolution which it is desired to pass be also transmitted, along with, whenever the latter is practicable, the names of the gentlemen who are prepared to propose or support such resolutions.

'XII. The Standing Congress Committee of the jurisdiction in which the Congress is to be held shall, not less than six months before the date fixed for the Congress, associate with itself all the leading inhabitants of the place where the Congress is to be held, who may be willing to take a part in the proceedings, and with them constitute itself a Reception Committee.

'XIII. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee (A) to notify to all the Standing Committees their appointment, and to invite them to proceed to call for delegates, and to send in before the appointed date the list of the subjects which the people of their jurisdiction desire should be discussed as required by Rule XI; (B) to collect and provide the funds necessary for the entertainment of the delegates and other purposes

essential to the holding of the Congress; to arrange for a suitable Meeting Hall; for the suitable lodgment of the delegates of other jurisdictions; for the food of the delegates during their stay, due regard being had to the customs, local or religious, of each, and generally to arrange for everything necessary for their convenience and comfort; and (C) to maintain a constant correspondence with all the Standing Congress Committees, and generally, so far as may be, assure themselves that the necessary work is duly proceeding in all jurisdictions.

'XIV. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee to obtain from the several Standing Committees the list of subjects referred to in Rule XI ... and after eliminating all subjects (if there be any such) of a clearly provincial character, or unsupported by definite resolutions intended to be proposed in regard to them, to compile the rest into one list ... and print and despatch the same by the 15th of November, in sufficient numbers, to the several Standing Committees to enable these to distribute copies to each delegate and provisional delegate ...

'XV. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee, as soon as possible after its constitution, to select and communicate to the several Standing Congress Committees the names of those gentlemen whom it considers eligible for the office of President, and in correspondence with them to settle who shall be invited to fill that office, and thereafter when an agreement thereon has been come to, to communicate with the gentleman finally approved by all, or a considerable majority of the Standing Committees, and generally to do all that may be necessary to settle the question of the Presidentship at least one month before the Congress meets.

'XVI. Of the subjects circulated under Rule XIV, for information, only those shall be brought forward and discussed at the Congress which shall be finally approved by a Committee (to be called the Subject Committee) consisting of the President-elect and one or more representatives of each jurisdiction, (selected by all delegates who may be then present at the Congress station), which shall meet on the day previous to the inaugural sitting of the Congress. ...

'XVII. It shall be the duty of the Chairman of the Reception Committee to preside at the commencement of the inaugural sitting of the Congress, and after delivering such address as he and the Reception Committee may consider necessary to call upon the assembled delegates to elect a President, and after such election to install the said President in the chair of office.

'XVIII. From and after the installation of the President, he shall direct and guide the entire proceedings of the assembly ...

'XIX. Until the subjects and resolutions approved by the Subject Committee have been discussed (and this in such order as the President may direct) and disposed of by the adoption, rejection or modification of such Resolutions, no other business shall be brought before the Congress ...

'XX. The Reception Committee shall be responsible for the due reporting of the proceedings, for the compilation under their guidance by the General Secretary of the Report of the Congress, and for the printing, publication and distribution of the Report in India and in England.'[12]

It is not known precisely why, as promised at the Madras Congress in 1887, the draft constitution did not come up for discussion at the Allahabad Congress in 1888. One of the

possible reasons could be that it encountered opposition from some of the older and well-established local associations in the country which were unwilling to merge their identity into the Congress as a separate and permanent organization. For example, when the Congress draft constitution was sent to the British Indian Association of Calcutta in 1888, the latter took serious objection to it on the ground that it aimed at transforming the character of the Congress from a casual gathering into a permanent organization and at doing away with the autonomy of the existing associations in the country.[13]

Even the fifth session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay in 1889 did no more than pass a long resolution for the 'regulation of certain matters pertaining to the Congress' which, among other things, said that 'the tentative rules for the constitution and working of the Congress which were first considered at Madras, and in regard to which various addenda have from time to time been circulated, be thoroughly considered during the coming year by the several Standing Congress Committees, and definitely dealt with by the Congress at its next session'.[14]

Far more important and controversial issues such as the Age of Consent Bill and the future of the Congress dominated the proceedings of the Congress in the next few years and the question of giving it a written constitution was naturally thrown into the background. It does not seem to have been seriously discussed at the Congress sessions of 1890, 1891 and 1892. When, however, the Congress assembled at Lahore in 1893, many Panjab Congressmen, led by Harkishen Lal and Bakshi Jaishi Ram, insisted that it must have a definite constitution. In a letter to the editor of the *Tribune,* Harkishen Lal wrote: 'What I wish to point out to the Punjabi friend of the Congress is that he should above all things insist on some Constitution being made for the national movement and if he sends out the Congress with a tolerable, workable Constitution, Punjab would have more than compensated for her lethargy and tardiness. What is wanted is a Central organization with its provincial branches and local or District Sub-Branches.'[15] Panjab Congressmen 'earnestly and forcibly [*sic*] pressed the point at a meeting of the Subjects Committee, but the idea was pooh-poohed by the Congress leaders on the ground that it was too early at the time'.[16] This caused great disappointment and annoyance to Panjab Congressmen.[17]

At the Madras Congress in 1894 an unseemly incident relating to a leading English supporter of the Congress from Madras, E. Norton,[18] underlined the need and revived the demand for a written constitution. Soon after the disturbance on the first day of the session,[19] 'the rules for the conduct of business' were hastily drawn up. J. Ghosal, one of the managers of the Congress, read them out to the assembled audience before the commencement of the second day's proceedings, saying sternly: 'Please hear them attentively, as the business of the Congress will be conducted according to these rules.'[20] This did not, however, prevent the recurrence of trouble on the second day.[21] On the fourth and final day of its session the Madras Congress passed a resolution which was moved from the chair and read as follows: 'That this Congress is of opinion that the time has come when the constitution of the Congress should be settled, and rules and regulations laid down as to the number of Delegates, their qualifications, the localities for assemblage, and the like, and in this view the Congress requests the Standing Congress Committee of Poona to draw up draft rules and circulate them among the different Standing Congress Committees for their reports; these reports together with the draft rules and the report thereon to be laid before the next Congress for its consideration.'[22]

Because it became involved in the prolonged and acrimonious controversy relating to the holding of the Social Conference in the Congress pavilion, the Poona Congress committee was late in preparing the draft constitution[23] and it could not be circulated to the various standing Congress committees before the Congress assembled at Poona in December 1895. But the very first resolution adopted there said: 'That the draft rules in regard to the constitution and working of the Indian National Congress, as framed by the Poona Congress Committee, in accordance with the Resolution in that behalf of the last Congress, be circulated by the Poona Congress Committee to all the Standing Congress Committees, with instructions to report to the General Secretary and Standing Counsel at least three months before the next Congress.'[24]

The resolution was moved by J. Ghosal, brother-in-law of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, who was an extremely dedicated, selfless and influential leader of the Congress. Speaking on the occasion, Ghosal observed: '... I have been connected with the Congress from almost the very beginning, and I have always had to assist in making the necessary arrangements and framing rules for the conduct of the business; so I know a little about constitutions and what we require and what we do not require. I think the time has hardly arrived when we should fetter this Congress with hard and fast rules. For it is still in its infancy. What are ten years in the age of a national and representative institution like this? To fetter it with hard and fast rules would be to prevent its healthy growth. We should allow it free scope and natural growth, helping it and nursing it as much as possible, according to surrounding circumstances and its powers of assimilation. We can get examples of this, if we compare the French and English constitutions. At the beginning of the Revolution, the French drafted a set of rules, calling them the rights of man, by which they thought they would be able to guide the future generations, and you know what the effect was. I think they had thirteen different constitutions in hardly as many years. Now, look on the other side. The ideal constitution of all the civilized countries is the British constitution, and that constitution can be summed up in two words. It has grown and not been made. It has grown by centuries of observation according to circumstances, and the growth of education and general improvement of the country and the people. ... That is the ideal constitution, and for this reason, I am not at all sorry—I do not think it is a cause for lamentation but rather one for congratulation—that we are not ready and we are not going to pass a hard and fast set of rules to bind down the Congress in its infancy. I hope the members of the Standing Committees will consider the matter very carefully before coming to a final decision.'[25]

The seconder of the resolution, Bakshi Jaishi Ram of Lahore, openly expressed his disagreement with Ghosal by insisting that the time had arrived to give the Congress a written constitution and thereby 'lay down its foundations on a solid footing'. 'Every representative institution', he argued, 'has got its own constitution, and it is the constitution that gives stability to institutions. ... I may impress upon you that the time has now come when we should add something real and substantial to the talk which we have for four days every year in the month of December for our deliberations. I may point out that there are three or four subjects which you should specially consider. To begin with, I may venture to say that we now require a sort of Cabinet or Council to consist of, at least, one member from each province to meet at least once a year for a few days in some central province. This Council, or whatever you may call it, should consider fully how to carry out our aims and objects and what practical steps should be taken in order to further those aims. Then another suggestion I wish to put forward is that we ought to know our own strength. Those who have worked in different provinces in this

country have come to know that almost everybody who lives in the country is a Congressman at heart. But still we meet with two sorts of people. There are some men who are Congressmen at heart only, while there are, again, Congressmen from within as well as from without. We should register the names of those of our brethren who are of the latter class. Then we should manage to have annual meetings of such Congressmen. We have got the Congress, in which subjects of Imperial importance are discussed; then we have got the Provincial Conferences, in which the subjects affecting the Provinces are deliberated upon; but we should further carry on our plans that we may succeed in having Divisional Conferences as well, so that every Congressman may be in a position to take part in the deliberation of subjects affecting the different stations as well as the Provinces. In our constitution, we should bear in mind that election and representation should be the system which should be recognised, and all the office-holders should be elected, every member having a right to vote; and again, to carry out our aims we should require certain funds and each Congressman whose name is registered should pay something towards those funds. We should have local funds and one-tenth or some other proportion should be placed at the disposal of the Cabinet.'[26]

Bakshi Jaishi Ram had tried to spell out not only the reasons for giving the Congress a written constitution, but also the kind of constitution it should have. He had suggested a central committee to manage its affairs; a regular register of Congress members; organization at three levels—national, provincial and divisional; a definite system of representation and election for various offices in the organization; and a recognized procedure for raising and allocating funds. With slight additions, alterations and embellishments, these continued in the following years to be the demands of those who desired that the Congress should have a constitution. A central executive committee was obviously wanted for three main reasons: first, to end the control of the Congress from Bombay and Bengal; second, in order to give due weight to all the provinces in the counsels of the Congress; and, third, to assure continuous and effective Congress work throughout the year. A register of Congress members would, it was hoped, assure a well-knit and business-like organization, a regular source of income, and a reduction in the expenses incurred on the annual sessions. Organization at the national, provincial and divisional levels was intended to ensure an increased participation of the people and a proper articulation of their wants and grievances. A definite system of representation and election for various offices was demanded in order to transform the Congress into a really constitutional and democratic organization. A recognized procedure for raising and allocating funds was needed in order to ensure that the Congress had a regular and adequate supply of funds and that they were spent on objects which were generally agreed upon as desirable and beneficial.

Early in 1896 the Poona Congress committee circulated a draft constitution to the various standing Congress committees with instructions to react to it at least three months before the next Congress assembled at Calcutta in December 1896. The circulation of the draft constitution naturally precipitated a lively controversy over the future of the Congress. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta, which was edited by Motilal Ghose and had never taken very kindly to the Congress, came out with some novel suggestions for its reorganization: the location of its permanent headquarters at Calcutta; the injection of a substantial aristocratic element into it; the selection of a prominent person (preferably a nobleman like Sir J.M. Tagore) as its leader; and the appointment of a central committee, consisting of representative men from all parts of the country, to mange its affairs.[27] The *Patrika* was initially able to secure for its proposals the support of some influential sections of Bengali society, notably

those represented by the *Bengalee*[28] and the *Hindoo Patriot,*[29] but ultimately not much came out of them.

The idea of locating the headquarters of the Congress permanently in Calcutta or of holding the annual sessions of the Congress there every year was easily dismissed because it would have resulted in the Congress being unduly dominated by the Bengalis and reduced it to a provincial assembly. Moreover, the advantages of a peripatetic Congress were only too obvious, even though they were gained at an enormous cost. The middle-class leaders of the Congress had no intention of handing over the organization to *zamindars* and *taluqdars,* even if the latter were willing and capable of taking it over. The idea of a supreme leader for the Congress was also easily dismissed, because no such leader was in sight or could be easily acceptable to the entire country at the time.

The proposal to constitute a central committee of representative men from all parts of the country to manage the affairs of the Congress did, however, gain widespread support. It would appear that all sorts of people agreed on the desirability of having an executive committee for the Congress, though for varying and often conflicting reasons. Congressmen from the relatively less advanced provinces like the North-Western Provinces and Panjab felt that a central committee would be some check on the Congress oligarchs from Bombay, Bengal and Madras and enable them to have a say in the running of the organization. The Congress oligarchs thought that a central committee would be the best means of enforcing their decisions on unwilling and recalcitrant local committees. Some even hoped that through the constitution of a central committee they would be able to bypass, if not destroy, the more or less unrepresentative local standing Congress committees. A central committee, it was presumed, would settle matters which were becoming increasingly controversial, namely the venue of the Congress, its president, the subjects it should discuss, and the expenditure on the British Committee and its paper *India.* In general, it was hoped that the central committee would remain active and vigilant throughout the year and so remove the common reproach that the Congress was a mere three- or four-day affair; it would also try to implement Congress decisions. The Congress was little more than an annual demonstration. It was expected that the central committee would transform it into a permanent institution.

There were some Congressmen who genuinely believed in the 1890s that it was still too early to try to frame a written constitution. There were many more who feared that a written constitution might be used by their opponents to drive them out of their positions of power and influence in the organization, as had happened in the case of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha in 1895, where B.G. Tilak and his associates had managed to 'convert a minority into a majority' and thereby capture the Sabha. There were still others who were afraid that any hard and fast rules regarding the number of delegates from each circle who could attend the Congress, their qualifications, manner of election, etc., were more likely to be followed in the breach than in the observance, and that this would further expose the weakness of the Congress. But even such Congressmen were beginning to feel, either because of popular pressure or otherwise, that it would not be entirely disadvantageous to have a central executive committee.

On 20 October 1896 J. Ghosal, secretary to the reception committee of the coming Calcutta Congress, addressed a letter to the various standing Congress committees which, among other things, said: 'The Puna Committee have drafted a body of rules which have been circulated among the different Standing Committees. In this connection a proposal has been made to the effect that a central governing body should be definitely organised to guide the work of the

Congress and to give unity and consistency to the operations of the various Standing Committees scattered throughout the country. The proposal is well worth consideration. At any rate the Reception Committee earnestly hope that the Congress to be held in Calcutta will not separate before accepting some kind of constitution which will as far as possible embody existing practice and provide for future contingencies.'[30]

Commenting on this, the *Hindu* of Madras wrote on 23 November 1896: 'There is an opinion in some quarters that the Congress is in need of no written constitution, and that having worked on the whole satisfactorily without one during these twelve years, it will work in the coming years also without being hampered by rules and restrictions. Mr. J. Ghosal, who moved the resolution in Poona [in 1895], said that the time had hardly arrived when the Congress should be fettered with hard and fast rules, and contrasted France and England in the matter of the constitution of their states. Mr. Ghosal's opinion is, we think, the opinion of many people, and we shall not be surprised if opposition is encountered at Calcutta. We ourselves are not disposed to make much of the fact that in England the constitution has grown mainly under unwritten laws.' The *Hindu* insisted that our own necessities and nothing else should be our guide, and it went on to say that 'there can be no doubt that apart from all theory, the practical wants of the Congress have suggested the extreme desirability of bringing the working of this huge organization under some rules and stimulating its activity by some efficient and carefully centralized organization'. 'We must', the paper suggested, 'carefully distinguish those parts of the Congress movement which show inactivity and a tendency towards stagnation and which therefore require the stimulation of an external force, from those which work with fairly satisfactory results even without hard and fast rules. We might illustrate what we mean by referring to the qualification of the delegates, the methods of election, the collection of funds and their expenditure, as parts of the movement which do not require to be hampered by any elaborate set of rules. These are done now more or less satisfactorily, and even though they may not come up to the standard of ideal perfection, the further progress of the movement has not been obstructed or retarded to any considerable extent by the results of the existing system in regard to these matters. But what is not done satisfactorily and will not be done satisfactorily until and unless a central force constantly keeps supplying the stimulus necessary to work up the numerous local centres, is the most important work of giving effect to the annual resolutions of the Congress, and of the rules already in force being duly obeyed by the various Committees and Secretaries.' The *Hindu* concluded by saying: 'The internal constitution of the Congress might be disposed of with a few simple rules, but its external work should be made subject to strict control by a central body which must be itself carefully constituted and which must be endowed with sufficient authority to control and keep in full activity the various local Committees.'[31]

The published report of the proceedings of the 1896 Congress does not even indicate whether or not the subject of a constitution came up for discussion, but a leader in the *Bengalee,* dated 9 January 1897, says that it was threshed out in the subjects committee—the delegates from Panjab being most enthusiastically in favour of its adoption. There were three sets of rules placed before the subjects committee: first, those prepared at Madras in 1887; second, those prepared by the Poona committee in 1895; and third, a body of rules prepared by the Calcutta committee. All these were referred to a sub-committee to report on the last day of the Congress. The sub-committee recommended that inasmuch as by the terms of the first resolution passed at Poona in 1895 the various standing Congress committees had not

submitted their reports on the draft rules, the matter be taken up at the next Congress in December 1897, and that in the meantime the joint secretaries be called upon to ask the standing Congress committees to send their reports. But the *Bengalee* went on to observe: 'The truth is the discussion of the Rules elicited very great differences of opinion, and the practice of the Congress is—it is a part of the unwritten law—not to pass a Resolution upon any matter in regard to which there is not practical unanimity of opinion.' The paper maintained that it could not be said that no progress had been made on the question. The discussion in the subjects committee had been most useful. The delegates had exchanged views and fully realized the difficulties of the problem. They were now in a better position to deal with it. 'An important step has been taken', the *Bengalee* concluded, 'towards the ultimate solution of a very difficult and complicated question.'[32]

The *Indian Mirror* of 5 January 1897 'deeply' regretted the decision of the Calcutta Congress again to postpone *'sine die'* the constitution question, and added: 'There have again been complaints from various quarters with regard to the high-handedness of some of the promoters of the Congress.'[33]

Before the Congress met at Amraoti in December 1897 the demand for giving it a regular constitution was again voiced in a section of the Indian press. But the Amraoti Congress was overshadowed by such grave events as the Poona murders, the tightening of the sedition law, Gokhale's 'apology incident', and the imprisonment of Tilak. Little surprise, therefore, that the constitution question was again shelved. On 23 January 1898 the *Mahratta* lamented that the constitution had not yet been fixed, and that it did not seem probable that it might be fixed for a long time to come.[34]

By the late 1890s the question of framing a constitution for the Congress had become far more difficult. It was no longer merely a matter of embodying existing practice into a constitution: the demand now was that the practice itself should be changed. Increasing dissatisfaction was being voiced in regared to the prevailing objects, organization and methods of the Congress. Loud complaints were being made about the apathy, inactivity and unrepresentative character of the standing committees, about the unpatriotic and autocratic behaviour of the Congress bosses, about the waste of money involved in holding the annual session in India and in maintaining the Congress organization in Britain, and about the failure of the Congress to achieve anything worthwhile. And behind all these complaints lay the basic—though not always clearly spelled out—issue as to who should control the Congress.

Aurobindo Ghose had boldly said in 1894: 'I say, of the Congress, then, this,—that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it proceeds towards their accomplishment is not the spirit of sincerity and wholeheartedness, and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, the leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders; in brief, that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at any rate by the one-eyed.'[35] The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote on 7 April 1899: 'If the Congress is to be maintained, almost all its members, who have taken any prominent part, should make room for a fresh band to take their place and relieve them of their duties.'[36]

Those who have power are seldom inclined to part with it willingly. Those who have been accustomed to exercising power arbitrarily are most reluctant to have their authority fettered and circumscribed by rules and regulations. It is extremely doubtful if the Congress bosses would ever have agreed to giving a constitution to the Congress—with the consequent risk of their losing control over it—had it not been for two main reasons: first, the irresistible pressure

of public opinion both within the Congress and without it; and, second, their desperate need for funds in order to maintain the British Committee of the Congress and its paper *India* in London.

The 1898 Congress at Madras took up the question of providing a constitution. There was 'a strong consensus of opinion' that the Congress 'should have, if possible, a Central Committee on behalf of all the Congress circles'.[37] In his presidential address to the session, A.M. Bose emphasized the need for 'a standing organization to carry on the work of the Congress from year's beginning to year's end'.[38] It was, however, felt that before the Congress could have a central committee at the national level, there must be 'provincial Executive Committees'.[39] The 1898 Congress therefore contented itself with adopting a resolution, moved by P. Rathnasabapathy Pillay (Madras), seconded by S.N. Banerjea (Bengal), and supported by A.K. Dutt (Bengal) and M.V. Joshi (Berar), which read as follows:

'(a) That all the Standing Congress Committees be requested to form Central Committees in their respective Provinces, for the appointment of agents and adoption of other measures, for furthering the objects of the Congress, such Central Committees submitting annually at the meeting of the Congress a report of the work carried out in their Provinces during the year.

'(b) That the Standing Congress Committees at Madras, Bombay, Nagpur, Amraoti, Calcutta, Allahabad and Lahore be requested to take measures to give early effect to this Resolution.

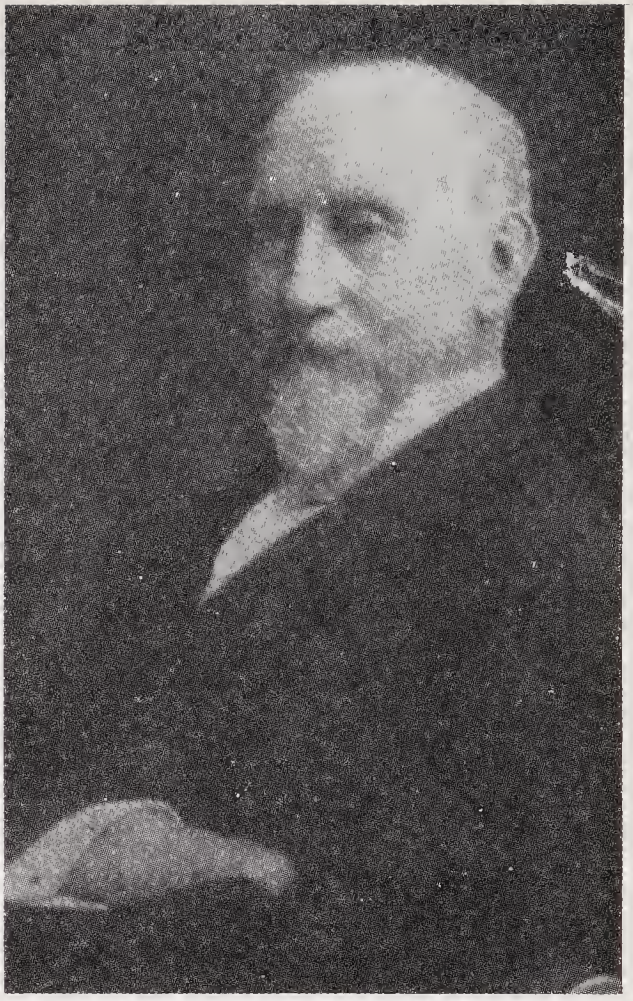
'(c) And further that a Committee, consisting of the following gentlemen, exclusive of the President and ex-Presidents now in India who shall be *ex-officio* members, be appointed to consider the draft constitution circulated by the Reception Committee of Madras and submit a definite scheme to the next Congress, and that this do form the first subject of discussion at the next meeting of the Congress:-

(1) Baboo Aswini Kumar Dutt, Bengal,
(2) Mr. D.E. Wacha, Bombay,
(3) Mr. Jeshiram, Punjab,
(4) Mr. Gungaprasad Vurma, Oudh,
(5) Pandit Mudon Mohun Malaviya, North-West Provinces,
(6) Mr. Raghunath Pandurang Karandikar, Satara,
(7) Mr. Bapu Rao Dada, Central Provinces,
(8) Mr. G. Subramania Iyer, Madras, and
(9) Mr. R.N. Mudholkar, Berar, to act as Secretary to the Committee.'[40]

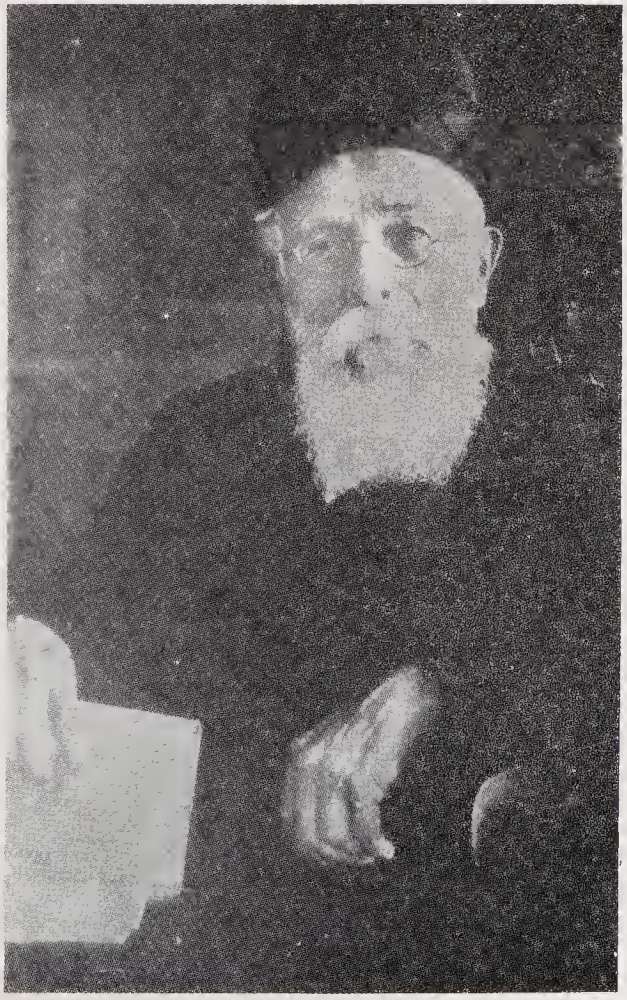
The speakers on the resolution emphasized the need to have central and provincial executive committees mainly on three grounds: first, to carry on the work of Congress agitation continuously and steadily throughout the year; second, to facilitate the raising of funds for expenses in India and in England; and, third, as necessary steps towards framing a fuller constitution for the Congress.[41]

On the second day of the Lucknow Congress, 28 December 1899, R.N. Mudholkar, as secretary of the drafting committee appointed a year earlier at Madras, submitted the committee's report, along with the 'Rules regarding the Constitution of the Congress', for the approval and acceptance of the assembly.[42] Speaking on the occasion, he was at pains to emphasize the care that he and his colleagues had taken in framing the constitution and to underline its salient features.[43] The Congress took 'two days to consider the Rules of the Constitution'; it 'consulted all ... [its] leading members and carefully revised ... [the] Rules'.[44] On the fourth and final day of the session, 30 December 1899, R.C. Dutt, as president, moved

A.O. Hume



William Wedderburn



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W. C. Bonnerjee

Badruddin Tyabji

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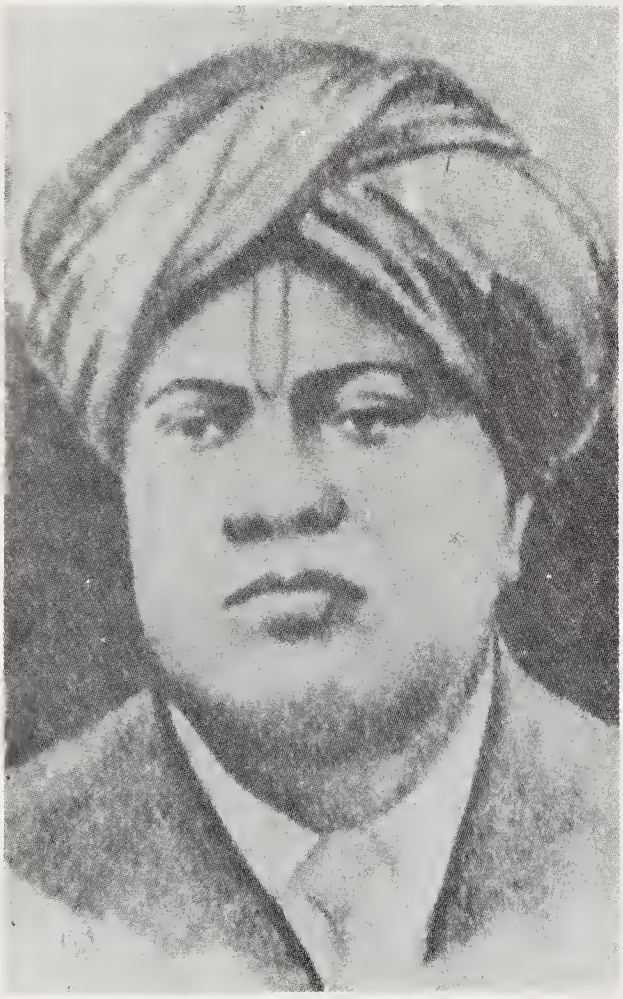

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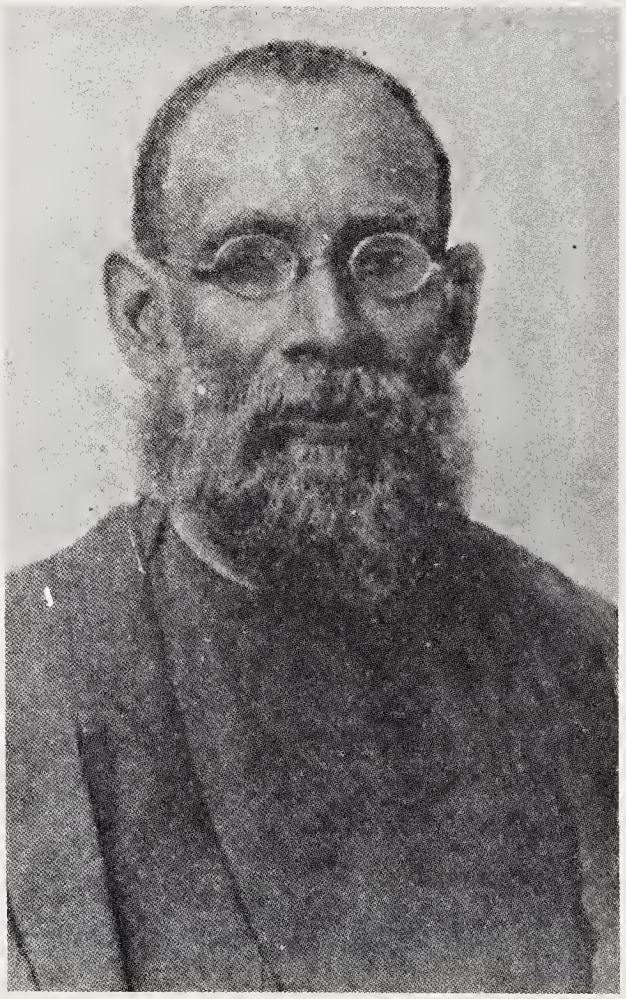


S.N. Banerjea

D.E. Wacha

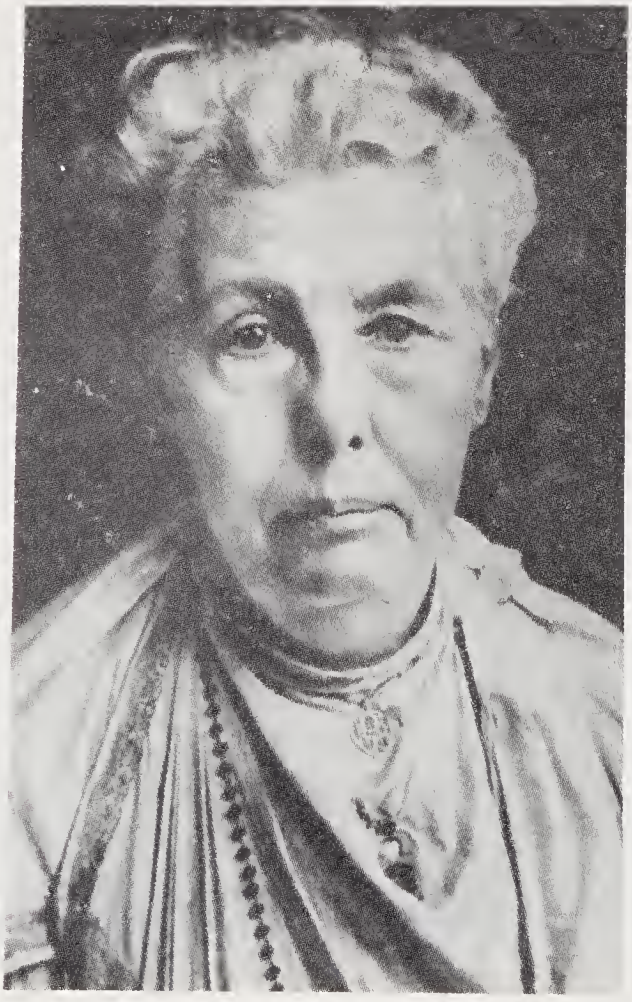
G. Subramania Iyer.

B.G. Tilak

G.K. Gokhale

Madan Mohan Malaviya

Lala Lajpat Rai



Mrs Annie Besant

the resolution embodying the final draft of the constitution for the acceptance of the Congress.[45] Though there were 'some gentlemen' who felt that there was 'no need at all for drawing up rules or having a constitution at all for this Congress',[46] the resolution was 'carried unanimously'.[47]

According to R.C. Dutt, the constitution adopted by the 1899 Congress at Lucknow was a document on whose preparation 'the very utmost care' had been bestowed and which had 'been subjected to repcated revisions and a most careful elaboration'.[48] It read as follows:

'1. The object of the Indian National Congress shall bc to promote by constitutional means the interest and the well-being of the people of the Indian Empire.

'2. It shall ordinarily meet once a year at such time and in such place, as shall have been resolved on, by the last preceding Congress. Provided that the Indian Congress Committee, as hereinafter provided for, may in case of necessity, change the place or time of the meeting of the Congress; provided also that in case of emergency the Indian Congress Committee may convene an extraordinary Session of the Congress at such time and place as may be determined by them.

'3. It shall consist of delegates clected by political associations or other bodies and by public meetings.

'4. Its affairs shall be managed by a Committee, styled the Indian Congress Committee, consisting of 45 members elected by the Congress, 40 of whom shall be elected upon the recommendations of the different Provincial Congress Committees, and, in the absence of such Committees, by the delegates of the respective Provinces in Congress assembled,[49] in the manner hereinbelow laid down, that is to say:-

For Bengal including Assam	8
For Bombay including Sind	8
For Madras including Secunderabad	8
For North-Western Provinces including Oudh	6
For Punjab	4
For Berar	3
For Central Provinces	3

The term of office of the members of the Committee shall be the period intervcning between two ordinary meetings of the Congress.

'5. The Indian Congress Committee shall meet at least three times a year, once immediately after the Congress, once during the year between the months of June and October, as may be determined upon by the Committee, and once immediately before the Congress, at such place as the Committee may find convenient.

'6. The Indian Congress Committee shall have an Honorary Secretary and a paid Assistant Secretary, with suitable office staff, for which a sum of Rs. 5,000 shall be granted annually, one half of which shall be provided by the Reception Committee of the place where the last Congress is held, and the other half by the Reception Committee of the place where the next succeeding Congress is to be held.

The Secretary to the Indian National Congress shall be the Honorary Secretary of the Committee.[50]

'7. Provincial Congress Committees shall be organized at the capitals of the different Presidencies and Provinces of India for the purpose of carrying on the work of political education, on lines of general appreciation of British rule and constitutional action for

the removal of its defects, throughout the year, by organizing Standing Congress Committees, holding Provincial Conferences, and such other means as they may deem proper, in consultation with the Indian Congress Committee, for furthering the objects of the Congress. They shall be the responsible agents of the Indian Congress Committee for their respective Provinces, and shall submit annual reports of their work to that Committee.

'8. The nomination of the President, the drafting of Resolutions and all other business in connection with the Congress, shall be done by the Indian Congress Committee. It shall also, subject to the approval of the Congress, frame rules for the election of delegates, the election of speakers and the conduct of the proceedings of the Congress.

'9. Rules and bye-laws shall be framed by the Provincial Congress Committees for the election of members, the conduct of their own proceedings, and other matters appertaining to their business. All such rules and bye-laws shall be subject to the approval of the Indian Congress Committee.

'10. A Committee, styled the British Congress Committee, shall be maintained in England, which shall represent there the interests of the Indian National Congress. The amount requisite for the expenses of the said Committee shall be determined and voted by the Congress, and the amount so voted shall be raised by the Indian Congress Committee in such manner as may be determined upon by that body from time to time.

'11. The Indian Congress Committee shall take such steps as they may deem fit to raise a permanent fund for carrying on the work of the Indian National Congress; and such fund shall be invested in the name of 7 trustees, one from each Province in India, to be appointed by the Congress.'[51]

The most important feature of the constitution adopted at Lucknow in 1899 was the provision for the Indian Congress Committee to control and carry on the work of the Congress. The committee comprised 45 elected members, with an honorary secretary and a paid assistant secretary, which was to meet at least three times a year and was empowered to nominate the president, draft resolutions, make rules for the election of delegates, and deal with 'all other business in connection with the Congress'.[52] The first meeting of the Indian Congress Committee was held at Delhi on 1-2 October 1900. Of the 45 members of the Committee only seven attended the meeting: 2 from Panjab (Bakshi Jaishi Ram and H.K. Lal), 4 from the North-Western Provinces (M.M. Malaviya, G.P. Varma, B.N. Dar and A. Nundy), and 1 from Bombay (D.E. Wacha). The meeting decided that the name of the president of the next Congress session, to be held at Lahore, should soon be announced by Wacha, the secretary, presumably after consultation with the person(s) whose name(s) had been recommended and other Congress leaders; that the British Committee should be maintained at an estimated annual expense of Rs. 12,000 which was to be raised by contributions; and that the newspaper *India* should be run as a separate concern and the expenditure on it should be reduced. The meeting accepted the suggestion of H.K. Lal that the Congress should pay greater attention to educational and industrial matters. The drafting of the resolutions to be discussed at the forthcoming Congress was not, however, done.[53]

The second meeting of the Committee was held at Lahore on 26 December 1900, immediately before the start of the Congress session there. It decided upon the subjects to be recommended to the subjects committee for the consideration of the Congress. It also decided to recommend to the Congress the continuance of *India* and an annual expenditure of Rs. 30,000 on the British Committee.[54]

The third meeting of the Committee was held at Lahore on 29 December 1900, immediately after the conclusion of the Congress session. The most important result of this meeting was that the resolution of the Lucknow Congress regarding the composition of the committee was slightly revised: Bengal, Bombay and Madras each lost one representative, while the North-Western Provinces gained one and Panjab two. In addition all past presidents of the Congress and some other officials (such as the general secretary, the assistant secretary, the chairman and the secretary of the reception committee, and the president-elect of the forthcoming Congress) became *ex-officio* members of the Committee. Its total membership was thus raised to more than sixty.[55]

The first meeting of the enlarged Indian Congress Committee was held at Allahabad on 28 September 1901. The attendance was not large, but there were representatives from all provinces except Bengal. As the next Congress was going to be held at Calcutta, the absence of all members from Bengal was ominous, though it was suggested that the members from Bengal might have absented themselves from the committee meeting as a protest against its venue having been changed from Calcutta to Allahabad. At this meeting D.E. Wacha was selected president of the next Congress session. There was a unanimous decision regarding the funds to be provided for the expenses of the British Committee. The subjects to be discussed at the next Congress were identified and G.S. Iyer of Madras was requested to prepare the draft resolutions. The committee also discussed certain proposals made by the secretary, Wacha, about reducing the business of the Congress session and the appointment of a small executive committee. Finally, there was a discussion on Lajpat Rai's criticism of the Congress in an article which was later published in the November 1901 issue of the *Kayastha Samachar* and it was realized that there was a widespread demand for reform of the Congress.[56]

The Indian Congress Committee was intended to end the virtual monopoly of the Congress by an oligarchy. Naturally, it was not liked by the oligarchy. In fact the 1899 constitution, which provided for the establishment of the Committee, had been adopted at the Lucknow session of the Congress which was not attended by the two most prominent members of the oligarchy, W.C. Bonnerjee and P.M. Mehta. The Congress oligarchy had, however, agreed to give the Indian Congress Committee a trial in the hope that it might at least help in raising funds for the British Committee and *India,* which were facing closure because of increasing financial difficulties. Instead of helping in raising funds for the British Committee and *India,* the Indian Congress Committee adopted a critical, if not censorious, attitude towards both and tried to reduce Congress expenditure on them.[57] This naturally annoyed the Congress oligarchs in India and their mentors in England and they decided to do away with the Committee. They did not apparently make the attempt at Lahore in 1900 for fear that the Panjabis might defeat the move. But at Calcutta in 1901 they saw to it that the Committee was suppressed. The question was not raised formally, but instead some Bengal and Bombay leaders conspired to prevent the election of a new Committee.

When the subjects committee of the Calcutta Congress was about to rise on 27 December 1901, H.K. Lal suggested that the general list of the Indian Congress Committee should be settled. He was immediately overruled by P.M. Mehta, who was the *de facto* chairman of the subjects committee. This high-handed proceeding created such an outburst of feeling that it became the topic of discussion outside the Congress pavilion. It began to be suspected that an attempt would be made to suppress the Indian Congress Committee. Next morning H.K. Lal sent in a strongly-worded remonstrance to D.E. Wacha, the president of the session, saying that

if the Indian Congress Committee was suppressed Panjab would secede from the Congress. He also enclosed the names of those whom the Panjab delegates had elected members of the committee for the next year. B.G. Tilak also wrote to Wacha requesting him, in his capacity as president of the Bombay Congress Committee, to draw up the names of the members of the Indian Congress Committee, but received no reply. Then, the secretaries of the various Congress circles—Bengal, Madras, Panjab and the North-Western Provinces—handed in to A. Nundy, the paid assistant secretary of the Indian Congress Committee, the names of their respective representatives and requested him to place them before the president. Nundy tried to do what was desired of him, but Mehta prevented the names from being put to the president or read out publicly. Mehta was supported by Bonnerjee and Wacha, and their behaviour caused general indignation. An informal meeting of the members of the old Indian Congress Committee took place and S.N. Banerjea was asked to communicate to Bonnerjee, Mehta and Wacha the sense of the meeting. But it obviously had no effect on them.[58]

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* gave out, on the authority of a leading and well-informed Congressman, the following reasons for the suppression of the Indian Congress Committee. First, 'having become the governing body of the Congress, the Congress Committee in India incurred the hostility of those persons who thought they had a prescriptive right to regulate the affairs of this national organization, and though they often found it inconvenient to exercise this right, they yet took it as an impertinence that others outside the charmed circle should venture to infringe upon their privileges'. Secondly, the busy leaders of the Congress found it inconvenient to attend the meetings of the committee. Thirdly—and this, according to the *Patrika* and its informant, was 'the chief reason' for the suppression of the Indian Congress Committee—it 'was a thorn in the side of the British Committee, which was very desirous that it should be done away with'. The *Patrika* went on to explain how previous to the establishment of the Indian Congress Committee, the British Committee, 'in a greater or lesser degree, exercised a controlling influence over the affairs of the Congress'. It generally suggested the name of the president. As regards its business in England, no one questioned its authority. It spent money as it pleased. All this changed with the constitution of the Indian Congress Committee.[59]

The point of view of those who did not favour the continuance of the Indian Congress Committee and were naturally pro-establishment was put forward in a circular, dated 21 August 1902 and issued under the signatures of W.C. Bonnerjee, R.N. Mudholkar, G.S. Khaparde and M.V. Joshi. Among other things, it said: '... when the Committee was first formed at the Lucknow Congress of 1899, as the basis of a constitution for the Congress, it was felt by all that the measure was at best experimental. The experiment, it must now be admitted, has failed. The Committee as constituted at the Lucknow Congress have not been able to meet a sufficient number of times to enable its members to exchange views with one another and have, so far as can be seen, done no useful work. Distances in India are so vast and the Congress workers so engrossed in their own bread-winning occupations that however strong the sense of duty may be in them, it is not possible for many of the members of the Committee to journey from place to place and attend meetings of their body. It would be unreasonable to expect them to do so. It is very much to the credit of those members of the Committee who were able to meet last year at Allahabad some time before the Congress itself met, and the Congress generally appreciated their labour. This meeting of the Committee was held a few months before the Congress, because the first meeting of the Committee took place so short a time after the Lahore Congress

that practically its deliberations may be said to have been merged in those of the Subjects Committee. The meeting at Delhi in October 1900, like the meeting at Allahabad last year, was very sparsely attended and its deliberations did not, it seems to us, help the cause to any appreciable extent. However much one may regret it, one cannot but feel that the existence of the Committee as at present constituted is more a hindrance than a help, and the time has now arrived when those anxious for the success of the Congress cause ought to reconsider their position. Our view is that the idea of having one general Executive Committee for the whole of India be given up but that in place of the Indian Congress Committee be constituted different Provincial Committees and fixed members appointed by the Congress and these Committees should carry on the work by correspondence through the Joint General Secretary.'[60]

W.C. Bonnerjee later communicated to A. Nundy the following reasons against the continuance of the Indian Congress Committee: '(a) It was too cumbersome to render it possible for the views of the members as regards any matter to be easily ascertained; (b) that the larger the number, the greater was the diminution of the sense of responsibility of each member; (c) that experience had shown that only a small proportion could be induced to meet once a year according to the rules; (d) that young and comparatively inexperienced members had the responsibility thrown on them of deciding weighty matters; (e) that as regards a particular matter[61] ... these had taken up an attitude to which some older men took exception.'[62]

The suppression of the Indian Congress Committee—especially the manner in which it was done—was widely and vehemently criticized by a large section of the Indian press throughout the country. Bonnerjee, Mehta and Wacha in particular were accused of behaving like despots, of nipping in the bud the first attempt at giving a regular constitution to the Congress, and of creating a split in the movement. The *Swadeshmitran* of Madras observed that Bonnerjee and Mehta were really responsible for the conduct of business at the 1901 Congress at Calcutta and by their side Wacha was no more than clay in a potter's hand. 'These two gentlemen [Bonnerjee and Mehta]', the paper added, 'have achieved great reputation as Barristers, and have little regard for other people. It is because of their patriotism that they have condescended to mingle with other men connected with the Congress; otherwise they are not men who will move with common people. These two men led this year's Congress as they chose; and the words of those who had come forward and conducted the proceedings during the many years these two had absented themselves, had no weight with them this year. The object of Mr. Mehta and Mr. Bonnerjee is that the Congress should act up to the wishes of the British Congress Committee in London. It was to carry out this object that they attended this year's sitting, set at naught all the *mamool* which had hitherto obtained in Congress proceedings, and carried all before them as they chose. This has aroused a great deal of dissatisfaction in the minds of many.'[63] The *Tribune* of Lahore argued, however, that Bonnerjee and Mehta had been 'practically the two stoutest pillars of the Congress so far as financing the movement, and keeping it generally working are concerned', and it would not do at this date to speak ungraciously of them after having made them bear the heaviest burden. If they 'behaved as despots ... it is because you gave them the moral right to have a voice over others by charging them with the royal function of making payments'. The paper concluded by saying: 'It is useless to talk of representative functions in a body which has no properly working Constitution, and in which the largest share of responsibility and financial burden falls upon a few. The men who discharge this responsibility and carry the burden cannot help arrogating to themselves greater powers than others, and those who will not do their share of work or bear

their share of the burden have little right to protest. Equality of rights implies equal division of responsibilities, and so long as the Congress has no working Constitution, *with a money basis* to it, giving every member a distinct status and privileges, and relieving the pressure from a few leaders, it is useless protesting against the benevolent despotism of the latter. If you do not mean business, and only care for a show, those must have the upper hand who mainly contribute to provide the entertainment.' The *Tribune* went on to say that the behaviour of Bonnerjee, Mehta and Wacha in regard to the Indian Congress Committee was not the sole cause of the dissatisfaction with them, 'though it gave the acutest point to their general doings'. For a long time past they had shown a tendency to 'boss' the situation and to make the Congress a mouthpiece of their own views and wishes. 'To a certain extent', the paper added, 'it is inseparable from a movement in which a few men are called upon to pay the piper and the rest are only required to dance to the tune. The situation has been brought about with the co-operation of some of the very men who are now protesting against it because they find themselves left out in the cold. By unstinted admiration and repression of every attempt to point out shortcomings they have brought the movement to its present pass, and raised the pedestals for the very idols whose high attitude they cannot now countenance.'[64] Writing a few days later the same paper observed that there was a disposition to do things in the Congress, if not arbitrarily, at any rate unsystematically. There was great danger to the Congress from the want of a consistent policy. 'The practical dissolution of the Indian Congress Committee', the *Tribune* added, 'means the cutting at the root of the first attempt made to establish a system and work up a Constitution.'[65]

The *Indian Mirror* of Calcutta remarked: '... there are ... serious charges against certain prominent Congress leaders. They are said to have throttled the Indian Congress Committee with the sole object of humouring the British Congress Committee, between whom and the Indian Congress Committee there has, of late, arisen some difference as regards the employment of the funds sent to the British Committee from India, and the importance of observing strict economy in the disposal of such funds. ... This seems to have caused great indignation in certain quarters, and it is feared that in course of time some of the leaders of the Congress will convert it into a close oligarchy in which a few will lord it over the many. The split in the Congress is said to be as complete as that existing in the Liberal party in England, and in the best interests of all parties concerned, and in those of the country as well, it is more than ever necessary that we should have a well-planned and clearly defined constitution for the Congress by which no room may be afforded for future complaints like the above.'[66]

In a very perceptive article dealing with the attitude of Congress leaders towards the increasing difference of opinion within the movement, a person calling himself 'A Congress Leader' wrote in the *Madras Mail* of 6 January 1902: 'In the face of this difference of opinion, which is becoming more and more pronounced, the leaders are apt to assert too emphatically their influence over their followers, and substitute arbitrary methods for methods of conciliation in the direction of Congress affairs. In order that the leaders may not drift along this unwise and dangerous policy, a large section of the Congress demands a constitution which will restrict the vagaries of the leaders and give equal opportunities to all. This feeling has been growing for some time, and two years ago, when the Congress met at Lucknow, a sort of simple and elastic constitution was adopted; the constitution consisting in the appointment of an Indian Congress Committee which was to be a sort of Standing Executive Committee of the whole Congress. But this Committee has hitherto received only a scant consideration from some of the

most prominent leaders, who are by no means the most enthusiastic among the workers. But they are men of such eminence that before their autocratic pronouncements the voice of opposition is hushed for the moment, though after the moment is passed, murmurs of discontent become audible amongst every section of the delegates. At the Calcutta meeting, Mr. Wacha proved an extremely weak President, and Mr. P.M. Mehta and Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee ruled him like a termagant wife would rule an uxorious husband. The real danger to the Congress in the future lies in this disregard of the leaders for the opinion and feeling of the rank and file. The Congress is coming to be looked upon as a serious movement, without which the nation can make no progress, and it should be led by persons fully conscious of this fact and gifted with a large amount of patience and tact, and sympathy with those whom they lead.'[67]

The echoes of the controversy continued to be heard for a long time. Writing on 10 November 1902, the *Indian Nation* of Calcutta referred to 'the grave discontent and disagreement' occasioned by 'the silent, summary suppression of the Indian Congress Committee' and remarked that if the Committee was unable or unwilling to work by reason of its unwieldy character or anything else, and if the weight of opinion at the Calcutta Congress was against its continued existence, the proper course would have been to propose its abolition and, if necessary, to substitute some other machinery in its place. 'But', wrote the *Indian Nation,* 'to abolish the Committee by simply ignoring it, to merely sniff it out of existence, was an insult to the Committee, an insult to the Congress that had elected it, and an irregular proceeding utterly unworthy of a body committed to a defence of democratic principles and arrayed against arbitrary exercises of authority. To say that the time has not arrived for giving the Congress a constitution is to make a serious admission. It would be interesting to know what further developments the "national convention" must make, in order that a "real constitution" might mechanically "grow out" of it. No constitution can grow or exist if the "leaders" are permitted to exhibit an unconstitutional mood with impunity.'[68]

The *Tribune* of Lahore wrote on 13 December 1902: 'The thoughtful and the working portion of the Congress is very much dissatisfied with the way in which things are managed by the leaders at the top. In fact, an impression is gaining ground ... that the Congress is merely run for the sake of the leaders to enable them to pose as such. ... we are bound in honesty to admit that some of the high-handed proceedings at the last session, and also since then, give at least a look of justification to the impression referred to above. Is it not true that some of the leaders, as soon as they succeeded in acquiring a position nearer Government, slackened in their interest in the popular movement and tried to use the same for flattering and pleasing the high officials, with a view to get into closer confidence of the latter? Is it not true that the leaders do not care for the general body of the people whom they pretend to lead, but whom often, in action and in utterance, both in and out of the Congress, they show their contempt of? Then, is it not true that besides showing themselves off, and that too only occasionally, in the annual meetings, these leaders do and spend absolutely nothing for the good of the people during the course of the year? Was it not due to their high-handedness that the Indian Congress Committee met a sudden and shocking death last year? Was it not strangled, intentionally, deliberately and unceremoniously? Is it not their neglect and their fault that the last breath of life has practically been taken out of the Standing Congress Committees, and they are, to all intents and purposes, dead? Before the inauguration of the Indian Congress Committee, the Standing Congress Committees at different centres used to be consulted in some matters at least, and the members felt, though only at irregular intervals, that the organisation was still

living, though only for the sake of living. But since the Indian Congress Committee was summarily dismissed at Calcutta, even this sign of vitality has disappeared ... The leaders at the top have evidently been of opinion that the general body should leave everything to them, except the finding of the sinews of war. But they are seriously mistaken if they think that anybody will give his hard-earned rupee for the upkeep of an organisation in the affairs of which he has no voice and in the management of which he is expected to take no interest. We think the financial failure of the Congress is mainly due to the ignoring of this, the first principle of political science. The leaders might issue circular after circular containing appeals and exhortations for financial help, but these will bear no fruit unless "the man in the street", so to say, is made to feel that he has a living, abiding, and substantial interest in the movement, and that his connection with the movement is not only desired but valued. Can the Congress leaders conscientiously say that they have ever come in intimate touch with the members of their own body and made any serious attempt to arouse an intelligent interest in them in the affairs of the movement, beyond impressing upon them the necessity of finding funds? The first and foremost matter, therefore, which requires attention and solution at the hands of the next Congress is to devise methods by which to arouse this interest and thus give a new lease of life to the movement. The Indian Congress Committee should, in our opinion, be reconstituted, may be with a lesser number of members, but with members who are prepared to undergo *some* amount of expenditure for the sake of the national cause. There is no use burdening it with men who are either too big or too busy to attend its meetings. The next thing is to give some finality to its decisions in order to save it from the ignominy and insult of finding its decisions upset at the merest will of a big man, who could not join its meetings at the time they were come to. The next thing to do is to revise and reconstitute the Standing Congress Committees and to give them a constitution.'[69]

Having succeeded in suppressing the Indian Congress Committee, the members of the Congress oligarchy obviously became more wilful, and they tended to ignore some of the well-established constitutional practices of earlier years. For example, Mehta and Wacha selected S.N. Banerjea to preside over the Ahmedabad Congress of 1902 without even consulting, as was the custom before the formation of the Indian Congress Committee, the Congress committees all over the country. This naturally added to the prevailing dissatisfaction, the more so because S.N. Banerjea had already presided over the Poona Congress in 1895, and also because an influentially-supported suggestion to elect a Bengali Christian, K.C. Banerji, as president[70] had been totally disregarded.

Panjab Congressmen carried out the threat they had publicly uttered at the Calcutta Congress in 1901, that if the Indian Congress Committee was suppressed they would secede from the Congress movement. Not one meeting was held anywhere in Panjab to elect delegates to the Congress session scheduled to be held at Ahmedabad in December 1902 and not a single delegate from Panjab went to attend the Ahmedabad Congress. Even the representation of the other provinces, except Bombay, was meagre. Of the 471 delegates who attended, 3 came from the Nizam's dominions, 4 from Berar, 5 from the United Provinces, 9 from the Central Provinces, 12 from Madras, 20 from Bengal, and 418 from the Bombay presidency.[71] The *Tribune* remarked that the Congress at Ahmedabad had 'dwindled down to nothing more or less than a Provincial Conference'. It was also at pains to emphasize that this was no accident, nor because of apathy on the part of Congressmen, nor even because of the counter-attraction of the Delhi Darbar being held almost simultaneously, but 'due to some deep-seated cause

which moved them [Congressmen] to enter a silent protest, by their absence', and that Panjab was the foremost in making the sense of its displeasure felt. The paper pointed out that the constitution which had been granted to the Congress mainly through the exertions of Panjabis had been 'arbitrarily swept away, and now the Congress is again allowed to drift where it likes and how it likes, or left to the irresponsible guidance of a clique the assumption of a dictatorship by whom is inconsistent with the very name of the National Assembly'. It warned that Panjabis would 'never, under any circumstances, consent to the Congress being made the plaything of a clique', and unless a disposition was shown to substitute for the Indian Congress Committee, which had been arbitrarily strangled, some authority which would represent the views of the rank and file, the best days of the Congress were over and it had entered a stage of decadence.[72] In two letters to the editor of the *Tribune,* dated 22 September and 10 October 1903, Dwarka Dass of Ambala described in detail how the Congress had come to be dominated by a handful of men who managed its affairs in the most arbitrary and wilful manner, in utter disregard of decency and democracy.[73]

The 1903 Congress was scheduled to meet at Madras. On the occasion of the Delhi Darbar in early January 1903 some Madras Congressmen chanced to meet their counterparts from Panjab and assured them that they would try their best to end Panjab's secession from the Congress by getting their grievances removed.[74] Speaking on behalf of Panjab Congressmen in April 1903, the *Tribune* assured Congressmen in Madras of Panjab's 'warm sympathy' for the movement, if the Congress was placed on its old footing of a national assembly which reflected the views not of a few but of the Indian public at large.[75] But the Madras Congress committee was dominated by V.K. Iyer, who was a close friend of Gokhale and Mehta. Early in September 1903 the reception committee of the Madras Congress selected L.M. Ghose to preside over the forthcoming session. Both the choice of the person and the manner in which it was made caused widespread dissatisfaction.[76] Late in September 1903 the honorary secretaries to the reception committee issued a circular letter regarding the constitution of the Congress. The letter traced the efforts at constitution-making in the Congress and emphasized 'the practical impossibility of laying down any definite or exhaustive regulations to which the country can be expected to conform'. After pointing out how the constitution adopted at the 1899 Congress had proved to be a failure, the letter went on to say: 'It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to remember that it is useless to frame elaborate schemes on paper and passing resolutions in support thereof, for there is no likelihood of the Congress or the country adhering to the same.' All that the letter recommended by way of improving the Congress organization was (a) the necessity of reducing the number of delegates to the Congress, and (b) the appointment of one or two paid assistant secretaries.[77] Later in December 1903 a draft resolution embodying these two points was also circulated by the reception committee to other Congress committees.[78]

Throughout 1903, and especially during the last quarter of the year, there was a lively controversy in the Indian press regarding the desirability or otherwise of giving a constitution to the Congress, and particularly of reviving the Indian Congress Committee. This naturally aroused the hope that the 1903 session might do something about the matter. Even five delegates from Panjab were encouraged to travel to Madras in order to attend the Congress. With the help of like-minded delegates from Madras and a few other provinces, they succeeded in raising the issue of a constitution for the Congress in a meeting of the subjects committee. But, after examining the issue 'from every conceivable standpoint', the committee decided that it was 'too early to press for the passing of hard and fast rules to regulate the election of

delegates' and 'that the question of giving a constitution to the Congress should be put off for some time to come'.[79]

On the opening day of the 1903 Congress session at Madras—28 December—there was an interesting passage of arms between L.M. Ghose, the president, and P.M. Mehta, easily the most powerful Congress leader of his time. Ghose's presidential address referred to 'the factions and cliques which ... have caused and are still causing considerable mischief by sowing dissension and discord among our public men', and it reminded the younger members of the Congress who aspired to lead their people that, as they wanted to introduce some little popular element into the autocratic constitution of the British government in India, 'they should be especially careful that their own acts may not be condemned as autocratic by the rank and file of our party. They should take care that it may not be said of any of them what Gibbon says of one of the Roman Tribunes that "he spoke the language of patriots and trod in the footsteps of despots".'[80] Even before Ghose delivered his presidential address, Mehta, who had obviously come to know of its contents in advance, while proposing Ghose's name for the presidency, tried to refute in anticipation the charges contained in it. He denied that there were 'terrible factions and cliques in the Congress' and he insisted that there could not 'be a greater calumny on a mild Parsee' like him than to call him 'a despot'.[81]

P.M. Mehta was known for his domineering and wilful ways.[82] He attended a session of the Congress at Madras for the first time in 1903. Not unexpectedly, he dominated the proceedings, particularly of the subjects committee over which he presided. But his behaviour at the Madras Congress in 1903, like that at the Calcutta Congress in 1901, offended many delegates and aroused widespread controversy. While his admirers praised him as a true leader,[83] his critics condemned him as an autocrat.[84]

Though the Madras session of 1903 put off the question of providing a constitution, it did take two significant decisions for improving the financial and organizational aspects of the Congress. It appointed certain Congressmen as secretaries for the various Congress circles and made them responsible for the sums due to the British Committee from their respective circles.[85] It also appointed G.K. Gokhale additional joint general secretary of the Congress.[86]

Until about the middle of December 1904 opinion in Panjab was divided over the issue of Congressmen from the province attending the forthcoming session in Bombay.[87] At last it was decided—partly under the influence of friendly advice given by Congressmen from the other provinces[88]—that they should attend 'under a strong protest' and, with the help of like-minded Congressmen from other parts of the country, try to convert the leadership to their point of view in regard to the desirability of giving a constitution to the Congress.[89] Twenty-five well-known Congressmen from Panjab attended the Bombay Congress of 1904. They presented their point of view before several Congress leaders, including H.J.S. Cotton, W. Wedderburn and P.M. Mehta, and the question was also discussed in the subjects committee. Finally, it was resolved that 'the question of the constitution of the Congress be referred for report [before 1 July 1905] to a Committee' consisting of twenty-one leading Congressmen from various parts of the country.[90]

In a series of two articles, entitled 'Our Protest at the Last Indian National Congress', and published in the *Panjabee* of 6 February and 6 March 1905, Lajpat Rai gave a detailed account of the prolonged parleys which took place at Bombay in December 1904—mainly at the initiative of Panjab Congressmen—regarding a constitution for the Congress. His advice to his fellow-Congressmen in Panjab was as follows: '(1) I think it would be unpatriotic on the part of

the Panjab to impair the unity of the movement by seceding from it; (2) that it will be impolitic and suicidal in the interests of the Panjab itself to do so; (3) that instead of dictating a constitution to the Congress, the Panjab will do better by forming a provincial organisation and working it properly, manfully, and above all with a spirit of self-sacrifice, because let me tell my Panjabee friends clearly that the most crushing fact advanced by Sir Pherozeshah against the case put forward by the Panjab was the total inactivity of the Panjab in matters political; (4) that, although I do not agree with that part of the Congress programme which is confined to begging and beseeching only, still it cannot be denied that the educational and political value of the Congress is immense and without it and besides it there is no other platform upon which all Indians can stand as brothers and workers in the same cause. I do not agree with that school of Congressmen who maintain that the only business of the Congress is to focus the public opinion of the country and to give expression to it at the end of the year. My opinion is that the Congress can and must do some constructive work as well, but those who care for it should lead the way by practical and actual work.'[91]

The discussions over a constitution which were held at the Bombay session in late December 1904 served several useful purposes. They enabled the delegates from Panjab to realize that their case was not as sound or strong as they had imagined it to be, and that at least some of their complaints against the leadership about the suppression of the Indian Congress Committee at Calcutta in 1901 were based upon wrong or inadequate information. Panjab returned to the Congress fold and Lajpat Rai agreed to be a member of the delegation which was scheduled to visit England in 1905. The discussions at the Bombay Congress made the leadership, on the other hand, realize that the demand for a constitution was not confined to a few Congressmen from Panjab, that it was increasingly gaining support in all parts of the country, and that it could no longer be ignored with impunity. But the discussions at the 1904 Congress also served to highlight—more prominently than ever before—the fact that underlying the controversy over the constitution lay more fundamental issues relating to the character and control of the organization. Lajpat Rai hinted at them when, after referring to Mehta's remark that the main purpose of the Congress was to 'meet together at the end of the year to give voice to the public opinion of the country',[92] he said: 'Several other leaders spoke to us in the same strain and denied in so many words that the Congress had any constructive or educational mission. Herein, in fact, we find the crux of the whole opposition to the idea of having any constitution for, or giving any permanent organisation to, the Congress.'[93] It was these fundamental issues relating to the character and control of the Congress which came to be more and more clearly spelled out in the months and years which followed and which, despite the temporary reconciliation at Bombay in 1904, tended to widen the breach between the Congress leadership and its rank and file.

What Panjab Congressmen could not secure by their secession from the Congress, they obtained soon after their renewed association with it. Meeting at Banaras in December 1905 under the presidency of Gokhale and in the wake of the partition of Bengal, the Congress 'unanimously' adopted a resolution, moved from the chair, which said: 'That a Standing Committee of the Congress be appointed to promote the objects of the Congress and to take such steps during the year as may be necessary to give effect to the Resolutions of the Congress.

'That the following gentlemen be appointed members of the Standing Committee for the year 1906:

(1) The Hon'ble Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, K.C.I.E. (Bombay),
(2) The Hon'ble Daji Abaji Khare (Bombay),
(3) G. Subramania Iyer, Esq. (Madras),
(4) The Hon'blc Nawab Sayyid Muhammad (Madras),
(5) Surendra Nath Banerjeee, Esq. (Calcutta),
(6) A. Chowdhuri, Esq. (Calcutta),
(7) Maulvi Abdul Kasim (Burdwan),
(8) S. Sinha, Esq. (Bankipur),
(9) The Hon'ble Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (Allahabad),
(10) Munshi Ganga Prasad Varma (Lucknow),
(11) Lala Lajpat Rai (Lahore),
(12) Lala Har Kishen Lal (Lahore),
(13) Rao Bahadur R.N. Madholkar (Amraoti), with
(14) D.E. Wacha, Esq. (Bombay), and
(15) The Hon'ble Mr. G.K. Gokhale, C.I.E. (Poona)

as Secretaries of the Committee.'[94]

On 21 July 1906 the *Indian Mirror* of Calcutta noted that the necessity of a constitution for the Congress was 'never so keenly felt or so seriously discussed in the Press as now'.[95] The *Indian Mirror* was correct. While the anti-partition agitation was gaining momentum and the pressure from the Extremists increasing, the Congress was becoming involved in endless controversies over its organization and routine businccss, and all kinds of schemes for its reform were being floated, so that even those Congress leaders who had for years opposed the adoption of a constitution on the ground that it was premature, became anxious that the Congress must have some sort of a constitution. The 15-member Standing Congrcss Committee appointed at the 1905 Congress met at Bombay on 17-18 November 1906 and drafted a constitution for the Congress.[96] With minor modifications it was adopted 'tentatively for one year' at the Calcutta session on 29 Dccember 1906.[97] Its main provisions were as follows:

'I. Provincial Congress Committees. (a) The Committee recommends that each Province should organize at its capital a Provincial Congress Committec in such manner as may be determined at a meeting of the Provincial Conference or at a special meeting, held for the purpose, of representatives of different districts in the Province. (b) The Provincial Congress Committee should act for the Province in all Congress matters and it should be its special care to organize District Associations throughout the Province for sustained and continuous work in the Province.

'II. Central Standing Committee of thc Congress. The Committee recommends that the Congress should appoint evcry year a Central Standing Committee for all India to carry out the Resolutions of the Congress, and to deal with all urgent questions which may arise and which may require to be disposed of in the name of the Congress, and that this Committee should consist of:

12 members from Bengal, Behar, Assam and Burma,
8 members from Madras,
8 members from Bombay,
6 membcrs from the United Provinces,
6 members from the Punjab,

4 members from the Central Provinces, and
2 members from Berar,
the President of the year and the General Secretaries being *ex-officio* members in addition.

'III. Selection of President. In the matter of the selection of President in future years, the Committee recommends that the following scheme should be adopted: The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held should organize a Reception Committee in such manner as it deems proper for making arrangements for the Session, and the choice of the President should in the first instance rest with the Reception Committee, if, after, consulting other Provincial Congress Committees, the Reception Committee is able to make the choice by a majority of at least three-fourths of its members. If, however, no such majority can be obtained to support the nomination of any person, the question should be referred to the Central Standing Committee of the Congress, and the decision of this Committee should be final.[98]

'IV. Subjects Committee. The Committee recommends that the Subjects Committee, appointed at each Session of the Congress to settle its programme of work, should consist of:
25 representatives of Bengal, Behar, Assam and Burma,
15 representatives of Madras,
15 representatives of Bombay,
10 representatives of the United Provinces,
10 representatives of the Punjab,
6 representatives of the Central Provinces, and
4 representatives of Berar, and
10 additional members for the Province in which the Congress is held, elected by the delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces in such manner as they deem proper; and that the President of the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all ex-Presidents and all ex-Chairmen of the Reception Committees who may be present at the Congress, the General Secretaries of the Congress and the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year should, in addition, be *ex-officio* members of the Subjects Committee.'[99]

A few months before the Congress assembled at Calcutta in December 1906 it was clear to the more prescient among the Congress leaders that there was going to be 'the first open trial of strength'[100] between the Moderates and the Extremists at the forthcoming session. They also realized that two strands of opinion had combined against them: one demanding a constitution for the Congress, and the other demanding a radical change in the Congress ideal and programme. They therefore felt that it would be prudent to yield to the first in order to be able to resist the second more effectively. As G.K. Gokhale wrote to V.K. Iyer on 29 September 1906: 'Two streams of feeling are at present mingling their currents together against the Congress. One is the dissatisfaction as regards the absence of anything like a constitution for it, and the other is the repudiation of its very ideal. The first feeling, as you know so well, is widespread throughout the country and I think that steps ought to be taken this year to conciliate it and thus prevent Pal's party from taking advantage of it for their own purposes. The other feeling of course is one in regard to which there can be no compromise and we who are not prepared to allow our imagination to run away with our judgement must stiffen our backs and fight it tooth and nail. I think the whole of Madras, two-thirds of Bombay, the whole of United Provinces, two-thirds of Punjab, two-thirds of Central Provinces and about half of Bengal are with us in this matter.'[101]

It is not, therefore, surprising that the Moderate leaders themselves took the initiative at the Calcutta session of 1906 in giving a constitution to the Congress. The resolution proposing the adoption of the constitution was moved by D.A. Khare. He pointed out that there had been 'an agitation for some years past' and 'almost every year at our sittings there were suggestions that the Congress ought to be given a constitution and almost on every occasion it was considered that it was not yet time to give a hard and fast constitution to a gathering like this'. 'But', he went on to say, 'we now have had an existence for about 21 years; we have grown free and easy and we have seen how we have gone on and it is thought that the time has now come when a sort of elastic and tentative constitution may be placed before you for your acceptance this year.' He explained how the 'Central Committee' appointed by the Banaras Congress had met earlier at Bombay and made certain recommendations which were 'very carefully considered' and 'approved of unanimously' by the subjects committee. He admitted that the recommendations were 'not quite as full as everybody will desire'. He emphasized that they were 'only to be tentative and to be tried strictly for one year, so as to enable us to see how they suit our requirements'. Khare was particularly at pains to refer to the provisions relating to the composition and functions of the reception committee and the subjects committee which had given rise to difficulties from time to time.[102]

The motion was 'simply and heartily' seconded by Kali Prasanna Kavyavisharad and supported by M.M. Malaviya, Lajpat Rai and Iswar Saran.[103] Of these only Malaviya and Lajpat Rai made any significant remarks. The former briefly referred to the agitation for giving a constitution to the Congress over the years and said: 'So we have been anxious for these many years to have a constitution. The Punjab has been pressing very strongly for it. The United Provinces has [*sic*] been joining it, as also Bengal. Indeed, all Provinces have been anxious to have a constitution (cries: "also Madras"); yes, Madras, too, for many years. Every year we have had difficulties in coming to a conclusion. We have now a tentative constitution put before you. There are many more important questions involved than are in the Draft Resolutions presented to you. It is merely for a year. I hope that next year we shall have a better and fuller constitution.' Malaviya emphasized in particular the importance of fixing the number of delegates to the Congress according to some principle. He said: 'There is need, I hope, you all agree, for fixing the number of delegates, if the deliberations of the Congress are to carry the weight which they should, as the deliberations of the whole country properly and fairly represented; then, you must fix the number according to some rules. At present, there is no limitation. One Province may only send five, while another may send 500; then you cannot say that the voice of the country taken as a whole has been represented. You must adopt some rule ... .'[104]

Lajpat Rai remarked that Panjab had been 'very keen on having a constitution' and he was glad that 'the whole Congress is practically unanimous that the time has arrived when a constitution must be framed for the Congress'. He conceded that it was 'not a very easy thing to frame a constitution for a body like the Congress' and expressed the hope that the working of the tentative rules for a year would give them 'experience for framing a better and proper constitution' and that in a few years' time they would be able to conduct their business in a more constitutional way than had hitherto been done. He insisted that it was 'absolutely necessary' to have rules 'in order to reduce the confusion that now and then attends our discussion'.[105]

It is difficult to say what kind of 'a better and fuller constitution' would have been adopted by the Congress at its 1907 session—after the stipulated trial period of a year—if the incidents of that year at Nagpur and Surat had not intervened. But one thing can be said with a reasonable amount of certainty: the incidents at Nagpur and Surat convinced the Moderate leaders of the absolute necessity not only of framing a fuller constitution, but also of giving it a marked anti-Extremist edge. It was noted earlier in this chapter that one of the most important reasons which made the managers of the Congress for years reluctant to give it a regular constitution was their fear that it might be operated by their adversaries for capturing the organization.[106] But, ironically enough, the incidents of 1907 at Nagpur and Surat persuaded the Moderate leaders that in order to ensure their continued dominance over the organization it was imperative to keep large sections of the Extremists out of it and that this could only be done by providing an elaborate and rigid constitution.

The disorderly scenes at Surat on 26 and 27 December 1907 convinced the Moderate leaders 'that the differences that made themselves so unpleasantly manifest ... were not merely differences on unessential particulars which time and calmer judgement might remove but were fundamental in character and related to the principles that should dominate the Congress movement thereafter and that the time had come when there should be an explicit and unmistakable enunciation of the basis on which Congress work was to be carried'.[107] Soon after the incidents of 27 December some of the senior Moderate leaders, P.M. Mehta, D.E. Wacha, G.K. Gokhale, R.B. Ghose, N.N. Sen, S.N. Banerjea, M.M. Malaviya, V.K. Iyer, and others, met in private and 'guided by the light of precedents in similar extraordinary emergencies in the history of other countries',[108] drew up a notice calling 'a National Convention' to meet the next day, 28 December, of all those delegates who were agreed:

'(1) That the attainment by India of Self-government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and participation by her in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members is the goal of our political aspirations.

'(2) That the advance towards this goal is to be by strictly constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of [the] existing system of administration and by promoting *National Unity,* fostering public spirit, and improving the condition of the mass of the people.

'(3) And that all meetings held for the promotion of the aims and objects above indicated have to be conducted in an orderly manner with due submission to the authority of those that are entrusted with the power to control their procedure ....'[109]

Over 900 delegates, out of the sixteen hundred odd who had come to Surat, attended the Convention in the afternoon of 28 December 1907, which was presided over by R.B. Ghose. In opening it, P.M. Mehta recalled how he had once described the Congress as 'an unconventional Convention for the purpose of promoting the interests of the country'[110] and added: 'I did not think then that in process of time we should really have to meet in the form of a convention for the purpose of resuscitation, if you will, reincarnating if you desire, the work which has gone on for 23 years with the co-operation of all provinces of this country.'[111] S.N. Banerjea remarked: 'We are about to enter upon what may be regarded as a new stage in the development of this great movement. "The King is dead: long live the King"—Congress is dead. (Cries of "no, no".) Only to live long, I am perfectly certain, ... with a constitution revised and resuscitated.'[112] Speaking on the occasion Lajpat Rai observed: 'Notwithstanding

all our misfortunes we are determined to continue our work and thereby give proof to the world that with all our internal quarrels we are all agreed in the service of the country and that under no circumstances are we going to desert the banner under which we have been fighting.'[113] The chairman, R.B. Ghose, emphasized that they had met 'not in Congress but in Convention' and that the Convention consisted of delegates who had subscribed to the 'two fundamental articles of our creed'. He announced that it was proposed to form 'a representative committee' with 'the object of formulating a constitution for the Congress, and laying down the lines on which our political agitation should be carried on'.[114] G.K. Gokhale read out the names of the members of the committee, which consisted of over 100 'leading Congressmen from all the provinces'.[115] On the motion of Mehta, Gokhale and Wacha were appointed joint secretaries to the committee.[116]

The Convention Committee, as it came to be called, met at Allahabad on 18-19 April 1908. Of the more than 100 members nominated at Surat, only about half were present (16 came from Bombay, 15 from Bengal, 5 from Panjab, 1 each from Berar and Madras, and the rest from the United Provinces). While the members from Bombay and the United Provinces, who together commanded an absolute majority in the meeting, were anxious to consolidate the control of the Congress by the Moderates and to keep the Extremists out of the organization, the members from Bengal and Panjab favoured some sort of accommodation with the Extremists in order to bring about unity in the Congress. There was a prolonged and heated debate in which threats of secession were given by both sides. The main controversy centered round two points: first, the desirability of having a definite 'creed' in the Congress constitution and making it obligatory for all Congressmen to sign it; and second, whether the adjourned session of the Congress should be re-convened and given an opportunity to endorse the new constitution or whether a new session should be called under the new rules. On both these points the Bombay and U.P. Moderates, who were far more determined than their adversaries in the meeting, easily had their way.[117] As Motilal Nehru reported to his son, Jawaharlal, then studying at Cambridge: 'I am glad the members or at least an overwhelming majority of them were at one with me that no compromise of any kind was admissible with the extreme party. We have laid down our principles in no uncertain terms and will exclude everyone who does not sign the "creed".'[118] The constitution devised by the Convention Committee defined the 'creed' (without actually using that word) of the Congress and gave its Moderate leadership the power to select delegates through definite procedures, which accepted the necessity of holding the next session of the Congress under the new rules, and which under one provision or another excluded the Extremists from the Congress. It read as follows:

'Objects'

'Article 1. The Objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing Members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members. These Objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.

'Article II. Every Delegate to the Indian National Congress shall express in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.'

'Sessions of the Congress'

'Article III (a) The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily meet once every year during Christmas holidays at such town as may have been decided upon at the previous session of the Congress.

(b) If no such decision has been arrived at, the All-India Congress Committee shall decide the matter.

(c) An extraordinary session of the Congress may be summoned by the All-India Congress Committee, either of its own motion or on the requisition of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees, wherever and whenever it may deem it advisable to hold such session.

(d) It shall be open to the All-India Congress Committee to change the venue of the Congress to some other town when such change is deemed by it to be necessary or desirable owing to serious or unforeseen difficulties or other contingencies of a like nature.'

'Component Parts of the Organisation'

'Article IV. The Indian National Congress Organisation will consist of:

(a) The Indian National Congress;

(b) Provincial Congress Committees;

(c) District Congress Committees or Associations affiliated to the Provincial Congress Committees;

(d) Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees affiliated to the District Congress Committees or Associations;

(e) Political Associations or Public Bodies recognised as Electorates in accordance with clause (3) of Article XX;

(f) The All-India Congress Committee;

(g) the British Committee of the Congress; and

(h) Bodies formed or organised periodically by a Provincial Congress Committee, such as the Provincial or District Conferences or the Reception Committee of the Congress or Conference for the year.

'Article V. No person shall be eligible to be a member of any of the Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations or Bodies mentioned in clauses (b), (c), (d) and (h), of Article IV, unless he has attained the age of twenty-one and expresses in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.'

'Provincial Congress Committees'

'Article VI (a) To act for the Province in Congress matters and for organising Provincial or District Conferences in such manner as it may deem proper, there shall be a Provincial Congress Committee with its headquarters at the chief town of the Province in each of the following nine Provinces: I Madras; II Bombay; III United Bengal; IV United Provinces; V Punjab (including N.W. Frontier Province); VI Central Provinces; VII Behar; VIII Berar and IX Burma.

(b) The Provincial Sub-Committees of the Convention shall, in the first instance, form themselves into Provincial Congress Committees.

(c) The Secretaries of the Convention Committee shall take steps to form separate Provincial Congress Committees for Central Provinces, Behar and Burma.

'Article VII. Every Provincial Congress Committee so formed will add to its number:

(a) Representatives elected in accordance with its terms of affiliation by every affiliated District Congress Committee or Association referred to in clause (c) of Article IV.

(b) As many representatives of recognised Political Associations or Public Bodies referred to in clause (e) of Article IV as each Provincial Congress Committee may think fit to determine.

(c) Such other persons in the Province as may have attended as many sessions of the Congress as Delegates as may be determined by each Provincial Congress Committee for its own Province.

(d) All such ex-Presidents of the Congress or ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees of the Congress as ordinarily reside within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee in accordance with clause (b) of Article VI or by virtue of the provisions contained in any of the foregoing clauses of this Article.

(e) The Joint Secretary or Secretaries of the Congress ordinarily residing within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee, such Joint Secretary or Secretaries being added as *ex-officio* member or members of the said Committee.

'Article VIII. Every member of the Provincial Congress Committee shall pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs. 5.'

'District or other Congress Committees or Associations'

'Article IX. The Provincial Congress Committee shall have affiliated to itself a District Congress Committee or Association for each District, wherever possible, or for such other areas in the Province as it deems proper, subject to such conditions or terms of affiliation as it may deem expedient or necessary. It will be the duty of the District Congress Committee or Association to act for the District in Congress matters with the co-operation of any Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees which may be organised and affiliated to it, subject in all cases to the general control and approval of the Provincial Congress Committee.

'Article X. Every member of the District Congress Committee or Association shall either be a resident of the District or shall have a substantial interest in the District and shall pay an annual subscription of not less than one Rupee.

'Article XI. No District Congress Committee or Association or Public Body referred to in clauses (c) and (e) of Article IV shall be entitled to return representatives to the Provincial Congress Committee or Delegates to the Congress or to the Provincial Conference unless it contributes to the Provincial Congress Committee such annual subscription as may be determined by the latter.

'Article XII. Each Provincial Congress Committee shall frame its own Rules not inconsistent with the Constitution and Rules of the Congress. No District or other Congress Committee or Association mentioned in Article IX shall frame any Rules inconsistent with those framed by the Provincial Congress Committee to which it is affiliated.'

'The All-India Congress Committee'

'Article XIII. The All-India Congress Committee shall, as far as possible, be constituted as hereinbelow laid down:

15 representatives of Madras;

15 representatives of Bombay;

20 representatives of United Bengal;

15 representatives of United Provinces;
13 representatives of Punjab (including N.-W. Frontier Province);
7 representatives of Central Provinces;
5 representatives of Behar;
5 representatives of Berar; and
2 representatives of Burma.

Provided, as far as possible, that one-fifth of the total number of representatives shall be Mahomedans.

All ex-Presidents of the Congress, residing or present in India and the General Secretaries of the Congress, who shall also be *ex-officio* General Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committee, shall be *ex-officio* members in addition.

'Article XIV. The representatives of each Province shall be elected by its Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting held, as far as possible, before the 30th of November each year. If any Provincial Congress Committee fail to elect its representatives, the said representatives shall be elected by the Delegates for that Province present at the ensuing Congress. In either case, the representatives of each Province shall be elected from among the members of its Provincial Congress Committee, and the election shall be made, as far as possible, with due regard to the proviso in Article XIII.

'Article XV. The names of the representatives so elected by the different Provinces shall be communicated to the General Secretaries. These together with the names of the *ex-officio* members shall be announced at the Congress.

'Article XVI. The President of the Congress at which the All-India Congress Committee comes into existence shall, if he ordinarily resides in India, be *ex-officio* President of the All-India Congress Committee. In his absence the members of the All-India Congress Committee may elect their own President.

'Article XVII (a) The All-India Congress Committee so constituted shall hold office from the dissolution of the Congress at which it comes into existence till the dissolution of the following Congress.

(b) If any vacancy arises by death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining members of the Province in respect of which the vacancy has arisen shall be competent to fill it up for the remaining period.

'Article XVIII (a) It will be the duty of the All-India Congress Committee to take such steps as it may deem expedient and practicable to carry on the work and propaganda of the Congress and it shall have the power to deal with all such matters of great importance or urgency as may require to be disposed of in the name of and for the purpose of the Congress, in addition to matters specified in this Constitution as falling within its powers or functions.

(b) The decision of the All-India Congress Committee shall, in every case above referred to, be final and binding on the Congress and on the Reception Committee or the Provincial Congress Committee, as the case may be, that may be affected by it.

'Article XIX. On the requisition in writing of not less than 20 of its members, the General Secretaries shall convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at the earliest possible time.'

'Electorates and Delegates'

'Article XX. The right of electing Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall vest

exclusively in (1) the British Committee of the Congress; (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations formed or affiliated as hereinabove laid down, and (3) such Political Associations or Public Bodies of more than three years' standing as may be recognised in that behalf by the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which the Political Association or Public Body belongs, provided that no such Political Association or Public Body shall be so recognised unless the said Political Association or Public Body, by a Resolution at a General Meeting of its members, expresses its acceptance of the principles embodied in Article I of this Constitution and makes the acceptance of the same a condition precedent to new membership.

'Article XXI. All Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall pay a fee of Rs. 20 each and shall be not less than twenty-one years of age at the date of election.'

'Reception Committee of the Congress'

'Article XXII (a) The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held shall take steps to form a Reception Committee for the Congress. Every one, who ordinarily resides in the Province, fulfils the conditions laid down in Article V of this Constitution and pays a minimum contribution of Rs. 25, shall be eligible as a member of the Reception Committee.

(b) No one who is only a member of the Reception Committee, but not a Delegate, shall be allowed to vote or take part in the debate at the Congress.

(c) The Reception Committee shall be bound to provide the necessary funds for meeting all the expenses of the Congress as also the cost of preparing, printing, publishing and distributing the Report of the Congress.'

'Election of the President'

'Article XXIII (a) In the month of June, the Reception Committee shall consult the several Provincial Congress Committees as to the selection of the President for the year's Congress. The Provincial Congress Committees shall make their recommendations by the end of July; and in the month of August the Reception Committee shall meet to consider the recommendations. If the person recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is accepted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the President of the next Congress. If, however, the Reception Committee is unable to elect the President in the manner mentioned above, the matter shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee, whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In either case, the election shall be final. ...

(b) There shall be no formal *election* of the President by or in the Congress, but merely the adoption (in accordance with the provisions in that behalf laid down in Rule 3, clause (b) of the "Rules" hereto appended) of a formal Resolution requesting the President, already elected in the manner hereinabove laid down, to take the chair.'

'Subjects Committee'

'Article XXIV. The Subjects Committee to be appointed at each session of the Congress to settle its programme of business to be transacted shall, as far as possible, consist of:

Not more than 15 representatives of Madras;

Not more than 15 representatives of Bombay;

Not more than 20 representatives of United Bengal;
Not more than 15 representatives of United Provinces;
Not more than 13 representatives of Punjab (including N.-W.F. Province);
Not more than 7 representatives of Central Provinces;
Not more than 5 representatives of Behar;
Not more than 5 representatives of Berar;
Not more than 2 representatives of Burma;
Not more than 5 representatives of British Committee of the Congress;
and additional 10 representatives of the Province in which the Congress is held; all the above-mentioned representatives being elected in accordance with Rule 9 of the "Rules" hereto appended, by the Delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces.

The President of the Congress for the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all ex-Presidents and ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees, the General Secretaries of the Congress, the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year, not excceding six in number, and all the members of the All-India Congress Committee for the year, shall, in addition, be *ex-officio* members of the Subjects Committee.

'Article XXV. The President of the Congress for the year shall be *ex-officio* Chairman of the Subjects Committee.'

'Contentious Subjects and Interest[s] of Minorities'

'Article XXVI (a) No subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mahomedan Delegates, as a body, object by a majority of three-fourths of their number; and, if, after the discussion of any subject which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that the Hindu or Mahomedan Delegates, as a body, are, by a majority of three-fourths of their number, opposed to the Resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such Resolution shall be dropped.

(b) The President of the Congress for the year may nominate 5 Delegates to the Subjects Committee to represent minorities or to make up such deficiencies as he may think necessary.

(c) In any representation which the Congress may make or in any demands which it may put forward for the larger association of the people of India with the administration of the country, the interests of minorities shall be duly safeguarded.'

'Voting at the Congress'

'Article XXVII. Ordinarily, all questions shall be decided by a majority of votes as laid down in Rule 21 of the "Rules" hereto appended, but in cases falling under Article XXX of this Constitution or wherever a division is duly asked for in accordance with Rule 22 of the "Rules" hereto appended, the voting at the Congress shall be by Provinces only. In cases falling under clause (1) of Article XXX, each Province shall have one vote, to be given as determined by a majority of its Delegates present at the Congress. In all other cases of Voting by Province, the vote of each Province, determined as aforesaid, shall be equivalent to the number of representatives assigned to the Provinces in constituting the All-India Congress Committee.'

'The British Committee of the Congress'

'Article XXVIII. The Reception Committee of the Province in which the Congress is held shall remit to the British Committee of the Congress, through the General Secretaries of the Congress, half the amount of the fees received by it from Delegates.'

'General Secretaries'

'Article XXIX (a) The Indian National Congress shall have two General Secretaries who shall be annually elected by the Congress. They shall be responsible for the preparation, publication and distribution of the Report of the Congress. They shall also be responsible for the preparation and circulation of Draft Resolutions of the Congress, which they must send to the Provincial Congress Committees at the latest in the first week of December.

(b) The All-India Congress Committee shall make adequate provision for the expenses of the work devolving on the General Secretaries, either out of the surplus at the disposal of the Reception Committee or by calling upon the Provincial Congress Committees to make such contributions as it may deem fit to apportion among them.'

'Changes in the Constitution or Rules'

'Article XXX. No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made (1) in Article I of this Constitution except by a unanimous vote of all the Provinces, and (2) in the rest of this Constitution or in the "Rules" hereto appended except by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of the Provinces, provided, in either case, that no motion for any such addition, alteration or amendment shall be brought before the Congress unless it has been previously accepted by the Subjects Committee of the Congress for the year.'

'Transitory Provisions'

'Article XXXI (a) The Committee appointed by the Convention at Surat on 28th December 1907 for drawing up a Constitution for the Congress shall exercise the powers of the All-India Congress Committee till the formation of the latter at the next session of the Congress. ...

(c) The President and Secretaries of the said Convention Committee should, in consultation with the Secretaries of the several Provincial Sub-Committees, arrange for the holding of a meeting of the Congress during Christmas next in accordance with this Constitution.

(d) For the year 1908, the Reception Committee may, in electing the President, consult the Provincial Congress Committees in the beginning of October, before the end of which month, the Provincial Congress Committees, on being so consulted, shall make their recommendations, and the rest of the procedure prescribed in Article XXIII should be followed and completed, as far as possible before the end of November.'[119]

The constitution adopted by the Congress in 1908 was an elaborate and exhaustive document. It laid down the objects of the Congress and the means through which they were to be achieved. Every delegate to the Congress was required to express in writing his acceptance of the creed of the Congress. The constitution provided for the creation of a central executive for the organization, known as the All-India Congress Committee. Provision was also made for the creation of Congress committees in the provinces, districts and sub-divisions, and the qualifications for the membership of these committees were specified. The constitution tightened discipline within the Congress and regularized its procedure. The right of public meetings to send delegates to the Congress was withdrawn and only Congress committees and associations recognized by or affiliated to them were permitted to elect the delegates. Detailed rules were made for the conduct and regulation of the annual meetings of the Congress.[120] The Congress still did not have a formal membership and was far from being a concrete political party, but it had now at least a regular, well-defined organization of its own at various levels.

Writing some time after the Surat split, G.S. Khaparde summed up the situation in the country as follows: '... regret at the occurrences, irrespective of the causes that led to them, appeared to be universal, coupled with a desire that a *modus operandi* should be found to bring all concerned together and arrange for an adjustment, honourable to all alike and calculated to further the cause of the Congress.'[121] Khaparde was right. Barring a few irreconcilables on both sides, Congressmen throughout the country desired that the division should be healed. The constitution of 1908 was the work of the Moderate irreconcilables and it only served to further the division between the Moderates and the Extremists. But the manner in which the Moderate irreconcilables foisted the 1908 constitution on the Congress and spurned all efforts at bringing about a *rapprochement* in the years following Surat also had the effect of discrediting them in the eyes of Indian nationalists all over the country.

The rigid and over-elaborate constitution of 1908 did not work well in practice. The average Moderate politician was not only a busy professional man who had little time for the work of the Congress, he was also an apathetic man. The provincial and district Congress committees led a dead-and-alive existence. Their membership was small. Their only activity was to meet once a year in December to elect delegates to the forthcoming session of the Congress. The earlier method of electing delegates at public meetings, however faulty and open to objection on other grounds, at least gave the masses some sense of participation in the work of the Congress and contributed to their political education. The new system by which half a dozen men met in solemn conclave and elected themselves and their friends—often many times their own number—as delegates to the Congress made a mockery of the electoral system. As Gokhale admitted: 'For this ... [the Congress electoral system] to work successfully it was necessary that the Provincial Congress Committees all over the country should take steps to revive District and Taluqa Congress Committees and establish them where they did not exist and get them all by constant vigilance and touch, to take a living interest in the Congress. Unfortunately this was not done except in two provinces—Madras and U.P.—and even there the Committees collapsed after a time—and by the 1910 Congress in Allahabad it became obvious that the scheme of the constitution as a means of pushing on the Congress organization had totally failed and that its only utility—real in the beginning, doubtful later on—was to keep those who had seceded from the Congress in 1907—out of that body.'[122]

The exclusion of the Extremists from the Congress, which the constitution of 1908 was meant to ensure, had an extremely debilitating effect on the organization. With the Extremists out, the in-fighting among the Moderates increased. On the other hand, public interest in Congress proceedings visibly declined and there was a sharp fall in attendance at Congress sessions. In its anxiety to remain a loyal and moderate organization, the Congress cut itself off from the rising generation of Indian nationalists. It won the recognition of the alien government, but was abandoned by its own people. In its desire to become a party, the Congress movement had degenerated into a political pressure group waiting upon the frowns and smiles of British officials. The complaint became general that the Congress was a dead or dying institution.

A few remarks by competent observers would suffice to prove the point. On 27 May 1908 C.R. Reddy from Madras wrote to Gokhale: '... it will be all up with the Moderates in Krishna, Godavery and other districts, *for the simple reason that they won't work.* All the enthusiasm, all the energy, aye even a considerable part of the common sense of our land seem to have been appropriated by the Nationalists. The Moderates as a rule are arm-chair critics, who find a

difficulty in everything except quiet-going selfishness. ... I am convinced that Moderation is often—too often—used as a decent excuse for letting public matters alone and the only unfortunate thing about the party of which you are the distinguished leader is the following. I fear moral feeling will have a large say in settling the comparative struggle of our parties, and its verdict will be more or less against us in *this* presidency. *We have become what is worse than hateful, ridiculous.* ... How to get rid of the old men who infest our party is the problem for us.'[123]

On 30 June 1910 Gokhale privately informed Wedderburn that the 1909 session of the Congress at Lahore was 'the poorest gathering on record. Bengal has all but seceded. The bulk of Punjab was not only indifferent, but actually hostile. The attendance from other Provinces too was unsatisfactory.' One of the main reasons for this development, Gokhale believed, was 'the opposition to the Constitution framed at Allahabad on the part of many, who in their views and convictions are more with us than with the Extremists, but who think that the Constitution stands in the way of a reunion on the Congress platform of all the parties in the country'.[124]

Commenting on the proceedings of the Allahabad Congress of 1910 a 'special correspondent' of the *Times of India* wrote: 'The fact seems to me that the Congress suffers in public enthusiasm from the predominance of platitudinous old men past work who crowd the platform from year to year. The moderate constitutional party, represented by the Congress, suffers from a plethora of extinct volcanoes whose annual platform eruptions have ceased to interest or even to amuse. It would be invidious to mention names, but unless a general clearance is effected of the platform notables, the Congress, I am afraid, is doomed to a life of utter inutility. Those who wish success to the constitutional movement, feel that its only chance of overcoming the extremist current and guiding public life in sound directions is in a prompt and ruthless change of its conventional ideas as to leadership.'[125]

On 24 September 1909 Gokhale wrote to Wedderburn: 'The organization evolved by the genius of Mr. Hume out of the material prepared by a succession of workers in different parts of the country is crumbling to pieces and the effort of the nation's heart and mind that brought us together in that organization seems to have almost exhausted itself. The split at Surat, followed by the vigour with which the Government came down on the Extremists everywhere, has turned the whole Extremist party into active enemies of the national constitutional movement. And the "Moderates" placed between the officials and the Extremists have not the necessary public spirit and energy of character to hold together effectively for long, though they are numerically strong in the country. In addition to the incessant attacks of the Extremists, the conduct of the Bengal "Moderates" is hastening the disintegration of the national movement.'[126]

Writing on the same subject in late December 1912 the *Beharee* observed: 'The constitution of this body is chiefly responsible for this [the small number of delegates at the 1912 Congress]. The limitation of the electorate and the restriction of the power of sending delegates to a few recognised associations and institutions in the country has tended to create a certain lack of enthusiasm among a large number of the countrymen. The paucity of the representatives of the people attending the national assembly has been a marked feature in the previous five or six gatherings.'[127]

Writing in the *Beharee*, 'a Congress Veteran' drew pointed attention to the fact that attendance at Congress sessions had been falling since 1907 and went on to say: 'Despite the paper Constitution, the Provincial Congress Committees do not seem to work at all and send

first-rate men as delegates. ... It is to be feared the Congress will degenerate and per chance die a natural death.'[128]

B.N. Basu, a leading Moderate from Bengal, wrote to Gokhale on 21 December 1914: 'the Congress is a decadent movement and badly wants life: the question is, how is the Congress to be brought into contact with the living life of the country?'[129]

Alive to these developments and to the growing clamour of the press and the public for a united Congress, some of the more sincere and sensitive Congressmen themselves began urging a modification of the 1908 constitution.

In his presidential address to the 1910 Congress at Allahabad, William Wedderburn referred to the differences which had arisen 'among Indian reformers themselves, between those who are known as "Moderates" and those who are called "Extremists", and remarked: 'I sincerely hope that those who have broken from the Congress, because they have ceased to believe in Congress methods and in constitutional agitation, will ... revert to their older faith. But in addition to such men, there is, I understand, a considerable number of old Congressmen, whose attachment to Congress principles is intact, but who are not now to be found in the ranks of the Congress, because they are not satisfied about the necessity of the steps taken by the leaders of the constitutional party, after the unhappy split at Surat, to preserve the Congress from extinction. These friends of ours obviously stand on a different footing from those who profess extremist views, and I would venture to appeal to their patriotism and ask them not to be over-critical in their judgment on a situation, admitted by everybody to be extraordinary, which could only be met by extraordinary measures. I would at the same time appeal to you, gentlemen of the Congress, to consider if you cannot, without compromising the principles for which you stand, make it in some way easier for those old colleagues of yours to return to the fold. Remember that the interests at stake are of the highest importance, and no attempt that can reasonably be made to close your divisions ought to be spared.'[130]

G.K. Gokhale, who acted as private secretary to Wedderburn when he came to India in late 1910 in order to preside over the Allahabad Congress, and had to deal with the large number of representations which came to Wedderburn from Extremist circles—mainly in Berar, the C.P. and the Deccan—felt convinced that 'while there was a general desire on the part of the seceders to rejoin the Congress their self-respect prevented them from asking their opponents to enrol them as members of the existing Congress Committees or to seek affiliation for their own organisations by the Provincial [Congress] Committees'. Gokhale also felt convinced that the Extremists 'had a fairly good case in asking that the old practice of electing delegates at public meetings be revived'.[131]

According to Gokhale's version given four years later, the whole matter was considered at Allahabad in 1910 at a private meeting of a few leading Congressmen under Wedderburn's chairmanship, but no definite proposals could be formulated for that session, mainly owing to the opposition of S.N. Banerjea and B.N. Basu.[132] The Allahabad Congress, however, adopted a resolution which said: 'That the amendments suggested by the United Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and such other amendments as may be suggested by other Committees be referred to a Sub-Committee consisting of the members of the All-India Congress Committee and two members elected by each of the Provincial Congress Committees, who are members of the Congress organization, for consideration and report before the end of October [1911], the Sub-Committee to meet at Allahabad, and that their report should be laid before the next Congress for consideration.'[133]

The question was taken up at a sitting of the subjects committee of the Calcutta Congress of 1911 when Gokhale 'proposed—and the proposal was seconded by Malaviya and supported by a number of leading men from the different provinces—that the Allahabad Constitution should be widened by providing for the election of delegates by public bodies which accepted Article I as a basic principle of their activity (whether they were affiliated to the Congress or not) or by public meetings held under the auspices of these bodies'.[134] There was a prolonged debate and the proposal was carried by an overwhelming majorty, only 7 or 8 members opposing it out of about a hundred who were present. As Gokhale wrote later: 'Surendranath this time supported us but Bhupendranath openly threatened to secede from the Congress if the recommendation was included in the Agenda Paper of the next day, and Mr. Wacha left the Subjects Committee in a temper as a protest against the contemplated change. As it was thought undesirable to have another unfortunate split in our ranks, M.M. Malaviya and I and the other supporters of the proposal agreed to postpone the consideration of the question for another year.'[135]

The Calcutta Congress of 1911 adopted two formal resolutions on the subject of amending the constitution. Resolution V said: 'That the Constitution and Rules of the Indian National Congress as amended by the Sub-Committee appointed at the last Session of the Congress be adopted.'[136] What it meant in effect was that Article XX of the Allahabad constitution was amended to read as follows: 'The right of electing Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall vest exclusively in (1) the British Committee of the Congress; (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations formed or affiliated as hereinabove laid down; (3) such Political Associations or Public Bodies of more than two years' standing as may be recognised in that behalf by the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which the Political Association or Public Body belongs; (4) Political Associations of British Indians resident outside British India, of more than two years' standing recognised by the All-India Congress Committee.'[137] The principal change was in clause 3 of Article XX of the 1908 constitution. Henceforward a political association or public body of more than two (not three as in the past) years' standing was allowed to elect delegates to the Congress. Such a political association or public body was still required to be recognized by the provincial Congress committee of the province to which it belonged. But the condition laid down in the 1908 constitution for this recognition, namely that 'by a Resolution at a General Meeting of its members, [it] expresses its acceptance of the principles embodied in Article I of this Constitution and makes the acceptance of the same a condition precedent to new membership',[138] was waived. Moreover, Resolution XVI said: 'That the All-India Congress Committee be asked to consider and report to the next Congress what further modifications may be made in the Constitution and Rules with a view to promote the objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of the Constitution, keeping that Article intact.'[139] Thus, the deliberations of the 1911 Congress did not represent a *non possumus* in relation to the vexed question of amending the Congress constitution of 1908.

Gokhale went to Bankipur for the 1912 session of the Congress, but he had to hurry to Madras after the first day of the session, 26 December, in order to attend to the work of the Public Services Commission, of which he was a member. He was therefore unable to take part in the deliberations which took place at the meetings of the A.I.C.C. and the subjects committee about further amending the Congress constitution.[140] As a result of these deliberations the Congress formally resolved that 'the Constitution and Rules of the Indian National Congress

organisation as amended by the All-India Congress Committee be adopted'.[141] The principal effect of this resolution was that another clause (5) was added to Article XX of the Congress constitution by which the right of electing delegates to the Congress was also given to 'Public Meetings convened by Provincial or District Congress Committees or other recognised bodies'.[142]

Gokhale later claimed that at the Bankipur Congress of 1912 his 'recommendation was accepted in a mutilated form, namely, by bestowing the right of election on public meetings held under the auspices of the *Congress Committees* [or other bodies recognized by them] *only*. This, of course, was not calculated to satisfy and did not satisfy the seceders.'[143] Gokhale was right. The Extremists had been demanding two things: first, that their own organizations should not be required to seek recognition by the existing Congress committees, which were dominated by their opponents, and second, that public meetings convened under the auspices of any association which accepted the objects of the Congress should be allowed to elect delegates to the Congress. The amendment adopted at the 1912 Congress allowed delegates to be elected at public meetings, but still required that such public meetings be convened only under the auspices of the provincial and district Congress committees or of other public bodies recognized by the Congress committees. This meant that in order to be able to get delegates elected to the Congress through public meetings held under their auspices, Extremist organizations had first to seek recognition from the existing Congress committees. Naturally enough, the Extremists were not satisfied and continued to stay away from the Congress.

The modifications in the Congress constitution made between 1910 and 1912 failed either to conciliate the Extremists or to revive the waning popularity of the Congress. The vast majority of the Extremists had by now given up their objection to the Congress creed, but they insisted—more as a matter of self-respect than anything else—that they should not be forced to enter the Congress through the electorates of their opponents. They demanded that all associations and public bodies which professed to aim at achieving self-government for India within the British empire through constitutional means, should be automatically affiliated to the Congress, instead of being required to seek affiliation formally, and that the right of public meetings to elect delegates to the Congress—withdrawn by the constitution of 1908—should be restored.

The prolonged debate over the issue of allowing public meetings to elect delegates to the Congress underlined the different approaches of the Moderates and the Extremists towards the character and purpose of the Congress. The Moderates looked upon the Congress as a political party, composed exclusively of men who subscribed to its basic creed, and having an organizational framework of its own. Even those Moderates who favoured a modification of the constitution of 1908 in order to bring back the seceders wanted the latter to give an assurance that they wished 'to come back to co-operate with us in carrying out the present programme of the Congress by present methods' and that they would 'not seek to overthrow the present programme and substitute other methods for present methods'.[144] The Extremists were welcome to return to the Congress not as Extremists but as repentant sinners, as men who had seen the error of their ways and desired quietly to return to the Congress. The Moderates feared the energy and activity of the Extremists and the latter's numerical preponderance in the country. They knew that to allow public meetings of all sorts to send delegates would mean the swamping of the Congress by the Extremists, who would soon proceed to overthrow the existing leadership and programme of the organization. They also feared that a *rapprochement*

with the Extremists might result in their forfeiting the goodwill and sympathy of their rulers which they had only recently secured.

The Extremists wanted the Congress to retain its character as a national movement. They looked upon it as an unofficial parliament of India, representative of all the different views and interests in the country. They were eager to re-enter the Congress for the simple reason that outside it they were in a political wilderness. And it was a dangerous wilderness, for the authorities could easily strike at them. Most of their leaders were already in jail or in exile and their attempt to organize a separate 'Congress' of their own in 1908 had been frustrated by the government. But, while eager to return to the Congress fold and willing to subscribe to its ideal, most Extremists had no faith in the Congress programme or its methods of work. They did not wish to merge their identity with the Moderates or to give up their principles. They therefore insisted on retaining their separate electorates and their freedom of action on re-entering the Congress.

The shrewder among the Moderate leaders realized that a reconciliation with the Extremists on the latter's terms would mean a return to the state of things which had prevailed before the split at Surat. A united Congress would either mean the end of the Congress or its capture by the Extremists. They therefore foiled another—and far more serious—attempt by the Extremists and their sympathizers within the Congress, led by Mrs Besant, to amend the 1908 constitution at the Madras session in December 1914.[145] The Extremists replied by turning the country against the Moderate leaders. They were aided in their task by the release of their leader, B.G. Tilak, the ferment created by the war, and the deaths of Gokhale and Pherozeshah Mehta, the two most outstanding Moderate leaders, in 1915. Under pressure from their own rank and file and from public opinion in the country at large, the Moderate leaders reluctantly yielded to an amendment of the Congress constitution in 1915 by which any association of at least two years' standing, which accepted the creed of the Congress and made it a condition for membership, was allowed to convene a public meeting and elect up to fifteen delegates to the Congress.[146]

After a bitter and acrimonious debate at the subjects committee stage, the Madras Congress of 1914 had adopted a compromise resolution which said: 'That the following two amendments suggested for the consideration of the Subjects Committee of this Congress be referred by the General Secretaries of the Congress to a Committee, consisting of three members to be nominated by each Provincial Congress Committee with the General Secretaries as *ex-officio* members, the said Committee to meet at such time and place as may be fixed by them in consultation with the Secretaries of the Provincial Congress Committees, and to report to the All-India Congress in regard to the said amendments for such action, if any, as the All-India Congress Committee may deem fit to suggest to the next Congress.

'The said two amendments are: 1. At the end of Article XX of the Constitution of the Indian National Congress Organisation now in force, add the following words: "If such a meeting be not called, it shall be called, for the election of delegates, within one month of the Congress, in any town or district, on the requisition of not less than 20 householders over 21 years of age, to the Provincial or District Congress Committee, in which the town of the requisition is situate." 2. In Article XX of the Constitution of the Indian National Congress Organisation now in force, make the following alterations: (i) at the end of clause (4) delete the word "and"; (ii) at the end of clause (5) for the full stop, substitute a comma; (iii) and add the words: "and Public Meetings convened under the auspices of any association which has, as one of its objects, the attainment of Self-Government by India on Colonial lines within the British Empire by constitutional means".'[147]

The second amendment 'was carried at the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee [,26 December 1915,] on the strength of the other provinces over Bombay. They insisted that some compromise must be made. ... The Bombay Moderates strongly opposed the amendment, but their wishes were overruled.'[148] But in the open session of the Congress on 29 December 1915 all provinces voted for the amendment.[149]

The amendment adopted by the Bombay Congress of 1915 added the following at the end of Article XX of the Congress constitution:

'(6) Public meetings convened under the auspices of any Association which is of not less than two years' standing on the 31st December 1915 and which has as one of its objects the attainment of Self-Government by India on Colonial lines within the British Empire by constitutional means:

Provided

(a) That the said Association by a special resolution accepts Article I of the Congress Constitution and notifies to that effect to the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which it belongs.

(b) That the said Association makes the acceptance of the said Article I a condition precedent to new membership.

(c) That the total number of the delegates to be elected by such public meeting shall not exceed 15 in number and no such Association shall be entitled to call more than one public meeting for the said purposes for any one session of the Congress.

But this, however, will be subject to the right of the All-India Congress Committee to disqualify any such political Association or Body at any time.

Explanation:- No person elected as a Delegate need be a member of any Congress Committee if he is otherwise qualified.'[150]

Some of the more militant Extremists were not satisfied with the rather grudging concession made at the Bombay Congress of 1915, but Tilak and his realistic colleagues decided to rejoin the Congress 'by taking advantage of the partial opening made for us and then strive to open the door full and wide'.[151]

For the first time after Surat the Moderates sat beside the Extremists in the same pavilion at Lucknow in 1916. Though the Extremists preponderated, the Moderates managed to get their nominee elected president and to dominate the inner councils of the organization. But their position was difficult and they had repeatedly to use the threat of secession in order to have their way. Next year, in the elections to the various Congress committees and offices in many parts of the country, the Extremists made a clean sweep of the 'old stagers'. What the more far-sighted Moderates like Mehta had always feared had come to pass: the machinery of the Congress had been captured by the Extremists. Many of the Moderates had been driven out of their positions of authority and influence within the organization, while those who had managed to survive the iconoclastic zeal of their opponents found the pace too hot for them. Not unnaturally, they began to think of withdrawing from the Congress and forming a separate organization of their own. Their experience of the 1917 session of the Congress at Calcutta, presided over by Mrs Besant, confirmed them in their resolve. The publication of the Montagu-Chelmsford reform proposals in July 1918 provided the Moderates with the necessary occasion and excuse for seceding from the Congress. They stayed away from the special session of the Congress held at Bombay in August 1918, and in November 1918 they organized a separate Moderates' Conference.[152]

5

Consensus and Conflict

The annual sessions of the Congress brought together hundreds and thousands of people from various parts of the country, old and young, rich and poor, with widely different cultural and social backgrounds. It was only to be expected that there would often be serious differences among Congressmen both with regard to the subjects to be discussed at the Congress and to the manner in which they were to be pursued. The *Kayastha Samachar* even went to the extent of saying: 'The Congress would not have been an Indian institution, if its members worked together smoothly, harmoniously and unitedly. Being conducted by the natives of India, it is but a reflex of their character.'[1] As a matter of fact, the surprising thing is not that Congressmen occasionally differed and quarrelled, but that they did this so rarely and that their differences and quarrels were largely contained. As P.M. Mehta remarked in 1903: '... we have our little differences—we always had them and shall have them. ... We have been bound together, in spite of differences, by one common desire to work for the good of our country ... when you think of it, is it not a wonderful thing that, coming from all parts of this great continent, coming from presidencies divided by long distances from each other, belonging to different races, holding different religious views, we still are able to feel ourselves as if we were one in the pursuit of that one great aim, the cause of our country?'[2]

In the early years of the Congress the most serious source of disagreement was the question of social reform. Despite pressure from some of its representatives, the first Congress did not take up questions of social reform. But advantage was taken of the presence of so many leading men from various parts of the country, many of whom were ardent social reformers, to discuss those questions informally. Moreover, on 30 December 1885, after the Congress had concluded its sittings, a public meeting was held at the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College at which well-known social reformers like Raghunath Rao, M.G. Ranade and K.T. Telang put forward their views on how best to tackle the evils of infant marriage and enforced widowhood.[3]

Some Indian social reformers and not very friendly British observers criticized the first Indian National Congress for not taking up questions of social reform. The president of the second Congress, Dadabhai Naoroji, replied to their criticism in the following manner: 'It has been asserted that this Congress ought to take up questions of social reforms *(cheers and cries of yes, yes)* and our failure to do this has been urged as a reproach against us. Certainly no member of this National Congress is more alive to the necessity of social reforms than I am; but, gentlemen, for everything there are proper times, proper circumstances, proper parties and

proper places *(cheers);* we are met together as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations, not to discuss social reforms, and if you blame us for ignoring these you should equally blame the House of Commons for not discussing the abstruse problems of mathematics or metaphysics. But besides this, there are here Hindus of every caste, amongst whom, even in the same province, customs and social arrangements differ widely,—there are Mahomedans and Christians of various denominations, Parsees, Sikhs, Brahmos and what not—men indeed of each and all those numerous classes which constitute in the aggregate the people of India. *(Loud cheers.)* How can this gathering of *all* classes discuss the social reforms needed in each individual class? What do any of us know of the internal home life, of the customs, traditions, feelings, prejudices of any class but our own? How could a gathering, a cosmopolitan gathering like this, discuss to any purpose the reforms needed in any one class? Only the members of that class can effectively deal with the reforms therein needed. A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation, and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class Congresses. But it does not follow that, because this national, political body does not presume to discuss social reforms, the delegates here present are not just as deeply, nay, in many cases far more deeply, interested in these questions than in those political questions we do discuss, or that those several communities whom those delegates represent are not doing their utmost to solve these complicated problems on which hinge the practical introduction of those reforms. Any man who has eyes and ears open must know what struggles towards higher and better things are going on in every community: and it could not be otherwise with the noble education we are receiving. Once you begin to think about your actions, your duties and responsibilities to yourself, your neighbours and your nation, you cannot avoid looking round and observing much that is wrong amongst you; and we know as a fact that each community is now doing its best according to its lights, and the progress that it has made in education. I need not I think particularise. The Mahomedans know what is being done by persons of their community to push on the education their brethren so much need; the Hindus are everywhere doing what they *can* to reform those social institutions which they think require improvement. There is not one single community here represented of which the best and the ablest men do not feel that much has to be done to improve the social, moral, religious status of their brethren, and in which, as a fact, they are not striving to effect, gradually, those needful improvements; but these are essentially matters too delicate for a stranger's handling—matters which must be left to the guidance of those who alone fully understand them in all their bearings, and which are wholly unsuited to discussion in an assemblage like this in which all classes are intermingled.'[4]

The president of the third Congress, Badruddin Tyabji, referred to the objection 'solemnly urged ... against our proceedings that this Congress does not discuss the question of Social Reform' and insisted that it had 'already been fully dealt with by my friend, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, who presided over your deliberations last year'.[5] He, however, went on to say: 'And I must confess that the objection seems to me strange seeing that this Congress is composed of representatives, not of any one class or community, not of one part of India, but of all the different parts, and of all the different classes, and of all the different communities of India. Whereas any question of Social Reform must of necessity affect some particular part of some particular community of India only,—and, therefore, gentlemen, it seems to me that, although we Mussulmans have our own social problems to solve, just as our Hindu and Parsee friends have theirs, yet these questions can be best dealt with by the leaders of the particular

communities to which they relate. I, therefore, think, gentlemen, that the only wise, and, indeed the only possible, course we can adopt is to confine our discussions to such questions as affect the whole of India at large, and to abstain from the discussion of questions that affect a particular part or a particular community only.'[6]

In his introduction to the *Report of the Third Indian National Congress,* Hume emphasized that though the 'primary and avowed objects' of the Congress were 'political, in the broadest sense of the word', it also brought some 'incidental advantages ... in its train'. For example, he added, by bringing face to face, and making thoroughly known to each other, men of light and leading of all parts of India, the Congress also 'brought together men equally, or even more, interested in other branches of the national regeneration', and it was hoped that they would equally profit indirectly from the Congress gatherings; 'and that in conjunction with, though distinct from them, conferences, of groups of co-religionists or co-workers in the same branches thus met together, would be held, and some advance thus secured in all directions'.[7]

Hume also lashed out at 'the carping crew of narrow brains' which, 'unable to find fault with what the Congress does, has never ceased to revile it for not aiming at something more', and said: 'Boldly has the Congress taken the Ossa of Political Reform upon its shoulders, but this fault-finding party, who themselves will not extend a finger to lighten the burdens of the country, find no words, it would seem, too bitter in which to denounce it for not piling the Pelion of Social Reform also on its existing load. The National Party have undertaken through the Congress the political regeneration of two hundred millions of men; and these fatuous foes of progress revile it, because, through this same organization, it does not also attempt their social, moral, and religious regeneration! The National Party is as deeply interested, we may say more deeply interested, in these latter than even in the former question, but it suits its means to its ends and applies in each case the proper mechanism. Throughout the country social and religious conferences, associations, and guilds are working at these deeper and more spiritual problems, and in many cases, men most prominent in the political work of the Congress will be found equally amongst the most prominent in the more spiritual work which other bodies are carrying on. But the methods and organization requisite for success in the one case would be fatal to success in the other; and it really seems impossible for any honest man, possessing any real knowledge of the country or its wants, to continue to find fault with the Congress because it refuses to overstep the bounds of its natural sphere, wherein it can work effectively, in order to plunge into other spheres in which it could only introduce confusion and discord.'[8]

The question of whether or not the Congress should take up issues of social reform was widely debated in the Indian press in the 1880s and an overwhelming majority approved of the negative course adopted by the Congress. But, as a sop to its critics—both friendly and otherwise—the Congress made some concessions to the social reformers in its ranks. It allowed them to use the Congress hall or pavilion for their meetings after the conclusion of its own sittings. Whereas after the Congress sessions of 1885 and 1886 the social reformers had contented themselves with arranging lectures and discussions on social questions, they used the occasion of the Madras session of the Congress in December 1887 to organize themselves formally into a National Social Conference whose proceedings became a sort of adjunct to the Congress session. All this was not to the liking of the bulk of the orthodox supporters of the Congress and prejudiced them not a little against the Congress itself.

Soon after its organization in 1887, the National Social Conference interested itself in the issue of raising the age for the consummation of marriage in India. The issue had been brought to the fore largely through the exertions of a Parsi reformer named B.M. Malabari, who secured for it the support of an influential section of people in Britain and of British officials in India. The outcome of his campaign was the Age of Consent Bill which sought to raise the age for the consummation of marriage in India from ten (as fixed by the Age of Consent section of the penal code in 1860) to twelve years. The introduction of the Age of Consent Bill in the governor-general's council in 1890 touched off a fierce controversy in all parts of India and almost threatened to split the Congress.

Indian opinion was almost universally against the Age of Consent Bill mainly on the ground that it meant an undesirable interference with native customs by an alien government. But the expectation of gaining the goodwill of the British public and officials persuaded some Congress leaders, who had earlier been opposed both to government interference with Indian customs and to the Congress taking up questions of social reform, actively to support the measure. This only served to enrage popular feeling against social reformers, both within the Congress and outside it. Opposition to the Bill was most vocal and organized in Bengal and Maharashtra, and the 1890 session of the Congress was held in Calcutta in an atmosphere of bitter controversy. Hume and other Congress leaders received communications from Poona protesting against the possibility of Congress supporting the Age of Consent Bill and demanding that the Social Conference should not be allowed to use the Congress pavilion for its deliberations.[9] Though Hume was annoyed at these and other demonstrations of protest and tended to treat them with contempt,[10] he and his reformist associates were duly warned by them. Neither the Congress nor the Social Conference dared discuss, much less support, the Bill.[11]

As chairman of the reception committee of the Calcutta Congress, M.M. Ghose authoritatively reaffirmed the Congress line on the subject. He referred to 'the charge, so often repeated, that the National Congress, as a body, is opposed to social reforms', and said: 'Such an accusation is based upon an entire misapprehension of the scope and functions of the National Congress, whose object ... is to point out to the Government what we conceive to be the defects in the administration of the country, and to ask only for such reforms as we are ourselves absolutely incapable of introducing without the aid of the Government, and in regard to the necessity of which we are all practically of one mind. Now, the many questions of social reform which are at present engaging the attention of the educated classes throughout India, are questions the solution of which is entirely in the hands of the people themselves. It is open to all of us to live as we like, or to eschew or alter at any time any custom which we may consider inconvenient or mischievous. The remedy being entirely in our own hands we can apply it whenever we choose, and on the majority of the points we are, unfortunately, by no means all of one mind yet. Besides, it should be borne in mind that the Congress is composed of diverse communities, each having its own religion and its peculiar usages, and it would be impossible for such a body to discuss the social customs of a particular community, based as they often are upon religious ideas, regarding which the members of another community professing a different religion have no adequate knowledge or information. (Hear, hear.) But, it by no means follows that the promoters of the National Congress are not as keenly alive to the importance of social as they are to that of political reforms. The same educational agency which has given life to the National Congress has already helped to bring about enormous social changes throughout India.

... There are movements of a very important character already on foot amongst the different communities of our people to promote the cause of social and religious reform, and in my humble judgment we should be travelling out of our legitimate province if we were to deal with such questions in this assembly.'[12]

The government did not, however, fail to take advantage of the serious breach in the ranks of the Indians and the Age of Consent Bill became law on 19 March 1891. The reformers were naturally jubilant: the government had supported them in the teeth of vocal and determined opposition from the vast majority of the Indian people. But they had only gained a Pyrrhic victory. The law itself was a trifling innovation which proved to be ineffective. It aroused a controversy, however, whose consequences were far-reaching. Besides reinforcing the rising tide of revivalism in the country, it created serious dissensions among Congressmen.

Before the 1890 session of the Congress met in Calcutta, a small section of over-enthusiastic reformers insisted that the Congress should openly pronounce itself on the Age of Consent Bill and, if necessary, face a split in the movement. The *Hindu,* for example, wrote on 12 December 1890: 'It is a question in which all communities are interested. It is an imperial question ... The Congress cannot therefore easily excuse itself from including this question in its deliberations and recording its opinion.'[13] Again, on 29 December 1891, it observed that 'the Congress would be making a serious mistake if it allows its desire for unanimity to get the better of its sense of public good', and it added: 'We know that there are some prominent members of the Congress who think any sacrifice can be made for unanimity. We do not take this view.'[14] After the passing of the Age of Consent Bill into law, the *Hindu* forecast on 26 March 1891 with evident satisfaction the emergence of two parties in India—the one favouring change and reform in Indian social as well as political institutions, and the other exerting itself for the preservation of the existing state of things. 'We do not think it possible', the paper went on to say, 'that these two parties while opposing each other in social matters, can harmoniously combine in demanding political changes. ... The formation of two such distinct parties is to be most cordially welcomed, because it will promote, as no other agency can, the free and thorough discussion of public questions.' The *Hindu* even predicted that the British government would 'naturally lean towards ... the progressive party ... than the party led by men typified by the leaders of the recent agitation.'[15]

The feeling that they had reached the parting of the ways and could no longer continue working together in the Congress was not confined to the reformers alone. The *Mahratta* spoke for the opposition when it wrote on 22 March 1891: 'It is a patent fact that we have been mischievously and shamelessly represented as a nation of savages and the *sudharaks* [reformers] have shamelessly testified to it. Let these *sudharaks* therefore form themselves into a separate nationality. They are unfit to be amongst us. ... The time has come when we should divide. ... The wounds that the *sudharaks* have inflicted cannot be healed, the mischief they have done is irreparable.' The paper also suggested the formation of 'a grand central association the principal work of which body should be that of self-preservation, self-protection and self-support. In this association we must enlist the sympathies of those only who are prepared to stand or fall upon the strength of their own independent work whether it is that of social or political reform, whether it is educational or industrial, whether it is that of revival or survival. ... Those who have by their conduct made a confession of their moral weakness or those that have betrayed their nation by directly or indirectly misrepresenting us to our rulers, or those who have abused the trust reposed in them by the people, will naturally have no place in this association.'[16]

Luckily for the Congress, the number of people who actively supported the Age of Consent Bill was very small and it did not include many reformers. As tempers cooled, it was generally realized that there had been much ado about nothing. At Nagpur in December 1891 saner counsels prevailed on both sides. Leaders like Hume and Ranade played their usual role of peacemakers and tried to restore the disturbed consensus.[17] The extremists on both sides were kept at bay. The Congress refused either to condemn government action in passing the Age of Consent Bill or to disallow the Social Conference from using the Congress *pandal.* But at many places where factional strife was rampant the past was neither forgiven nor forgotten.

In Poona, in particular, the smouldering fire of the controversy between the progressives and the conservatives burst into a blaze once again in 1895. The conservatives, led by B.R. Natu, M.B. Namjoshi and B.G. Tilak, insisted that the Social Conference should not be allowed to use the Congress pavilion for its scheduled sessions in December 1895. They argued that the activities of the Social Conference should be totally separated from those of the Congress, first, because they acquired a fictitious importance from the connexion, and secondly, because they were disliked by a large number of Congress supporters. Behind the rather trivial issue of the use of the Congress pavilion by the Social Conference lay the larger and far more important issue of the character and control of the Congress organization. In a letter addressed to the editor of the *Times of India,* Bombay, Tilak said: 'We only wished that everyone, whether orthodox or heterodox, reformer or reactionary, should join in and support the Congress movement, as every inhabitant of India is entitled to do. No efforts, in my opinion, should be spared to induce the large masses of Poona and other places in the Presidency to take interest in the forthcoming sessions of the Congress, and thus to place the Congress on a popular basis. ... We must approach the trader, the artizan, and the working man, as well as the educated classes, and make them subscribe to the Congress fund, and in order to do this we must appeal to each of them in a manner so as not to offend their susceptibilities unnecessarily. ... That is the sole difference between the two parties in dispute at present. One wishes to draw to the Congress as large a portion of the public as it possibly can, irrespective of the question of social reform. The other does not wish to go much beyond the circle of the friends of reform. ... The real point at issue is whether the forthcoming session of the Congress in Poona is to be a Congress of the people or of a particular section of them.'[18] The *Mahratta* tried to hammer home the same point in editorials entitled 'Whose Is the Congress? Of the Classes or of the Masses?' and 'Whose Congress Will It Be?'[19]

The controversy had already spilled out of committee rooms and newspaper columns into the streets. On 22 October 1895 a public meeting of some six thousand 'subscribers and sympathisers of the Indian National Congress' was held in Poona. It passed a few important resolutions. The first, moved by Tilak, regretted 'that the work of the Congress is drifting into the hands of a small clique' and declared 'that unless the work of the 11th National Congress be entrusted to the gentlemen as are prepared to work for the Congress and Congress alone, it cannot be carried as successfully as is expected by the people of a historic city like Poona'. Another resolution, moved by Namjoshi, said: 'In the opinion of the Poona public the Social Conference is not popular owing to its deliberations and sectional character and the time has now come when the public confidence in the National Congress should not be allowed to be shaken by the cognate relation which is now believed to exist between the Congress and the Conference.'[20] Again, on 10 November 1895, another public meeting was held in Poona at which similar sentiments were expressed.[21]

The social reformers had tended to regard the agitation against the use of the Congress pavilion by the Conference as an attempt to humiliate them and drive them out of the public life of Poona. Their fears were not entirely groundless. In July 1895 Tilak and his socially conservative but politically radical allies had wrested the control of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha from the hands of Ranade and his socially progressive but politically moderate associates. Deprived of their local base and steadily losing in popularity, the Ranade group tried to maintain its position of prominence in regional as well as national politics by relying more heavily than ever before on the support of the Bombay moderates. Both the social reformers and their opponents in Poona had tried to gain outside support for their cause in 1895 and a local quarrel had assumed the proportion of an all-India issue. To that extent the controversy in 1895 was a dress rehearsal for the coming battles within the Congress.

As was to be expected, in view of the heterogeneity of the assemblage and the variety of subjects which it discussed, there was hardly a session of the Congress which was not marked by heated controversy over some issue or the other. But, generally speaking, the Congress managed to resolve the controversy and to maintain its unity. This was made possible, in the main, by the fact that soon after its establishment the Congress evolved certain principles and procedures for its smooth and harmonious functioning. The most important of these was what may be described as the consensus method. It was first publicly spelled out by Badruddin Tyabji, president of the third Congress held at Madras in December 1887. Intervening in the debate over the resolution on the Arms Act, which had led to sharp differences of opinion among the delegates, Tyabji remarked: 'Gentlemen, it has always been my desire that any proposition which may be carried in this Congress should not only be carried by the votes of a very large majority, but should, as far as practicable, be carried with the unanimous consent of all. If you find, for instance, in one particular part of India that there is opposition to a particular proposition, it will not do I think for this Congress of all parts of India to force upon that particular part of India a particular Resolution ... .'[22] Again, in his concluding remarks as president he said: 'We have carried all the Resolutions, and I am happy to say that we did so with perfect unanimity. ... this is really the spirit in which I should desire to see all future Congresses conduct themselves. If we are really to do the work of our nation, and if we are really to do good to India, we must learn not only to demand but when necessary to concede. If we ask that a certain proposition be accepted, and if there is an opposition to it from the delegates of any part of India, I think it would always be a wise policy for the gentleman who proposed the Resolution so to modify his proposal as to meet, if possible, the objection that is raised. For some time, indeed, we cannot expect to see every Resolution carried with perfect unanimity, but I do say that with a little patience and mutual forbearance practical unanimity may be arrived at in almost every case which it is essential to proceed with. For I feel perfectly sure that you will all agree with me that, on any future occasion, if the delegates from Bombay, for intance, desire to press a Resolution which is not acceptable to the delegates from Bengal or Madras, our Bombay friends will need to drop the Resolution when they cannot win over the Madras delegates or the Bengal delegates to their side.'[23]

It was at Tyabji's insistence and in order to reassure the minorities, particularly the Muslims, that the Allahabad Congress in 1888 passed a resolution which said: 'That no subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subject Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mahomedan Delegates, as a body, object unanimously or near unanimously, and that, if, after the discussion

of any subject, which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that all the Hindu or all the Mahomedan Delegates, as a body, are unanimously, or near unanimously, opposed to the Resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such Resolution shall be dropped; provided that this rule shall refer only to subjects in regard to which the Congress has not already definitely pronounced an opinion.'[24] Proposing the resolution for adoption, P. Ananda Charlu remarked that it was 'in strict accordance with one of the fundamental principles of the Congress which is that it shall only deal with those subjects on which a substantial agreement has been come to by the great bulk of the intelligent men in the country'.[25]

The Congress was forced to adopt the consensus method not only in order to preserve its unity, but also to impress the outside world, particularly the British, with the force of this unity. For example, when at the fourth Congress held at Allahabad in 1888, sharp differences of opinion arose over the report of the Public Service Commission, M.M. Ghose remarked: 'I think we must try to avoid, in regard to questions of this sort, any substantial difference of opinion, and, above all, heated discussions which are not likely to lead to any useful result or secure any good object. What we ought to aim at, in such matters, is to secure, as far as possible, unanimity of opinion.'[26] The same point was emphasized by N.G. Chandavarkar, who said: 'We have saved ourselves, I hope, from presenting to the outside world the spectacle of a house divided against itself; and I hope that for the sake of unanimity we shall avoid touching on points on which any difference of opinion exists among ourselves. The mission of the Congress is to deal with those questions on which we are all substantially agreed, not those on which we differ. When we get all that we all agree to be necessary it will be time to take up questions on which we are not agreed.'[27]

By 1890 the consensus method seems to have become a generally recognized principle of the Congress, for we find the following comment regarding the working of the subjects committee of the Congress in the Introduction to the report of that year's session: 'It is hardly ever necessary to vote, because, according to one of the basal principles of the Congress, subjects in regard to which, after full discussion, considerable difference of opinion continues to exist, are *ipso facto* thrown out. The main object of the Congress is to press upon the attention of the Government of India and the people and the Government of England those reforms, and those reforms only, in regard to which the whole country has come to a substantial agreement; in regard to which the people of all provinces, of all races, castes, and creeds, are practically of one mind. This is the explanation of that marvellous unanimity often suspiciously commented on by European critics, that characterizes, as a rule, the Congress debates. The Congress itself, through its elected representatives, weeds out all subjects in regard to which a practical agreement, in all part of the country and by all parties, has not been arrived at. It is this, too, which ought to give weight to the formal recommendations of the Congress, since these are not proposals advocated by this or that body, this or that province, but only such as are concurred in by the educated and semi-educated classes throughout the Empire.'[28]

The consensus method could not, however, completely prevent contentious subjects from cropping up at Congress sessions or from Congressmen being divided over public issues. A few examples would suffice to prove the point.

Early in 1892 Hume himself became the cause and centre of a serious controversy in Congress circles and outside. On 16 February 1892 he sent out from Calcutta, not as general secretary of the Congress but in his individual capacity, a 'private and confidential' circular to

the several standing Congress committees for circulation amongst Congressmen.[29] The main object of this circular was to persuade Congressmen to contribute more liberally to the funds of the British Committee in London than they had hitherto done, and not to fritter away their resources on such things as a memorial to the recently-deceased Pandit Ajudhianath, the joint general secretary of the Congress. In the style of the early nineteenth-century radicals in Britain,[30] Hume tried to scare Congressmen, especially the more well-to-do, into greater activity and sacrifice in the cause of reform so as to avert a revolution in India. He voiced his deep-seated conviction 'that the cup of the misery of scores of millions of our masses is wellnigh full, and that day by day, Poverty, the mother of Anarchy, is pressing with a heavier and heavier hand upon an ever-growing portion of our population. As surely as night follows day, must a terrible rising evolve, sooner or later, out of this state of affairs, unless we can remedy existing evils and redress the more prominent of our paupers' grievances. Do not be buoyed up with false hopes. Providence in its mercy may delay the catastrophe, but come it must, and come it will, and it may be sooner and not later. Do not fancy that the Government will be able to protect you or itself. No earthly power can stem a universal agrarian rising in a country like this. My countrymen will be as men in the desert, vainly struggling, for a brief space, against the simoon. There will be no foe to meet in the field, but rail and road will become impassable, bridges will be wrecked, telegraphs cease to exist, supplies be arrested. Thousands of the rioters may be killed, but to what avail, when there are millions on millions who have nothing to look forward to, but death—nothing to hope for, but vengeance; as for leaders—with the hour comes the man—be sure there will be no lack of leaders. This is no hypothesis—it is a certainty. Recall what you know of the growing poverty and sullen discontent amongst the masses, and reflect for yourselves, those amongst you who have read history to any purpose, what such a state of things ever has led to and ever must culminate in.' Hume insisted that this 'general ruin' could only be averted by those radical reforms in the administration which the Congress had declared to be essential. Even these alone would not suffice, but they would do much, and they would substitute hope for despair in the hearts of the masses, and give us time to work out those other changes and reforms which are required 'for a peaceful solution of the terrible problem'. 'But,' Hume went on to say, 'here in India, we pray, we argue, we protest, to men who cannot, or will not hear, cannot or will not see. Our only hope lies in awakening the British public to a sense of the wrongs of our people—to a consciousness of the unwisdom and injustice of the existing administration. The least we could do would be to provide ample funds—for sending and keeping constantly in England deputations of our ablest speakers to plead their country's cause—to enable our British committee to keep up an unbroken series of public meetings, whereat the true state of affairs in India might be expounded—to flood Great Britain with pamphlets, leaflets, newspapers and magazine articles—in a word to carry on agitation there, on the lines and scale of that in virtue of which the Anti-Corn-Law League triumphed. As a fact, however, but a small sum, comparatively, is provided—a *wholly inadequate sum,* and even that, though provided, is paid so tardily that thousands of letters, circulars, and reminders are needed to get in even this ineffectual contribution. ... It is not your patriotism I appeal to only, but to your dearest interests; your homes, your little properties, your lives and those, it may be, even, of all dearest and nearest to you, are at stake. Cherish no false hopes. You are the creation of Great Britain—of British learning, history and literature, and with British rule you stand or fall. On the peaceful continuance of that Rule depend all that is dear to you in this life, all your earthly

hopes, but that peaceful continuance can only be ensured by securing those fundamental changes in the policy and practice of the administration that you have advanced in Congress.'[31]

The standing committee at Allahabad, where the next Congress was going to meet, was the first to react to Hume's circular. Its secretary, Pandit Bishambharnath, wrote back to Hume on 23 February 1892 that he and his committee, having considered the contents of the circular very carefully, were of the view that its publication was 'inexpedient and calculated to do great injury to the cause which you and we have so much at heart'. Though the letter was written by Hume 'as an independent member of the Congress Party, and not as its General Secretary', yet, considering the position he occupied, it would be held to be 'a manifesto of the whole party', and 'we feel positively certain that our opponents will misconstrue it and misrepresent us in a way that is likely to do us serious injury as a party'. We also think that 'a considerable number of men in our own ranks will feel nervous at the publication of the letter'. In England such a publication would be considered wholly harmless and regarded 'as an honest expression of the deep and earnest conviction of a person who, possessing an intimate knowledge of the condition of the country, and burning with a desire to promote the welfare of both the rulers and the ruled, feels it his duty to awaken them to a proper understanding of the situation', but you know 'how different India is from England, and with what hostility the expression of such opinions is treated here'. Bishambharnath, therefore, requested Hume 'to reconsider the matter, and to stop the circulation of the letter'.[32] Hume, however, brushed aside his objections, saying that an adversary always misconstrues and misrepresents, and that, as the danger was real and imminent, it was imperative to mince matters no longer, to come out boldly as men and insist on attention being given to the gravity of the situation. 'A great many of you', he added, 'do not understand what a house of cards our grand administration is. You have not seen, as I have, the entire administration shrivel up like a parchment, flung into the fire, in less than a month, in consequence of the mutiny of some 40,000 soldiers ... very few, if any, of you have so studied and thought over history as to realise what these two propositions necessarily involve as a consequence—a starving and discontented population, [and] an administration of foreigners, constituting much less than 1 per cent even of the community.'[33] The Allahabad committee was persuaded against its will to circulate the letter.[34]

The views expressed by Hume in his circular of 16 February 1892, especially those regarding the danger of an agrarian uprising in India, were amplified by him and incorporated in the introductory article to the report of the 1891 session of the Congress, of which a draft was soon afterwards circulated by him to the several standing committees.[35] Once again, it was the Allahabad committee which raised its voice in protest. M.M. Malaviya, 'in a most earnest letter [to Hume] apparently on behalf of the Allahabad Committee condemned it as seditious, as calculated to harm the cause irreparably, as certain to frighten most of our party and so on'.[36] In the face of such a protest from the committee at Allahabad, 'where the next Congress [was] to be held', Hume, who was due to leave for England shortly and did not wish 'to leave behind a cause of quarrel', reconsidered the matter. He obviously took advice from M.M. Ghose, who besides being his close friend was a leading criminal lawyer. The latter told him that in the recent *Bangabasi* case, Sir Comer Petheram, chief justice of the Calcutta high court, 'did lay down broadly that anything tending to bring the Government into discredit was seditious'. According to Hume, this was 'a monstrous doctrine opposed to the best English authorities' which he intended 'to bring before the bar of English public opinion', for it would make any attempt at exposing the shortcomings of the existing administration seditious. But, instead of

running the risk in India, where 'the juries are packed and it is hopeless to expect justice', Hume deemed it prudent to withdraw the introductory article. He informed the various standing committees on 16 March 1892 that the report of the Congress session held at Nagpur in December 1891 would be published in India without the usual introductory article in view of the protest from the Allahabad committee, and that he would try to publish it in England as part of the English edition of the report and separately as a pamphlet.[37]

Hume sailed for England from Bombay on 22 March 1892. A week later, the Anglo-Indian *Morning Post* of Allahabad published his circular of 16 February 1892 and the correspondence relating thereto.[38] It was immediately afterwards reproduced by several newspapers in the country, and a telegraphic summary of it appeared in the London *Times* on 31 March 1892.[39] This caused quite a sensation both in India and in England. Hume's appeal for increased efforts to persuade the British electorate that Indian reforms were imperative was largely ignored and discussion centered on his 'incendiary' language. The Anglo-Indian papers dubbed the circular 'seditious' and urged upon Congressmen the desirability of disowning Hume.[40] Most of the pro-Congress papers were apologetic.[41] They tried to justify Hume by saying that though his picture might be a little overdrawn, it was substantially correct. Only a few like the *Kesari* and the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* gave him their unqualified support.[42] Neutral observers were inclined to think that Hume's enthusiasm had carried him beyond the bounds of discretion.[43] Congress leaders were seriously embarrassed and thought that he had harmed the cause at a critical juncture. 'Hume is cutting the throat of the Congress by his own ill-advised and precipitate action,' Wacha wrote privately to Naoroji on 2 April 1892.[44] As secretary of the Bombay standing committee of the Congress, he wrote to the press that the committee disapproved of Hume's letter and had refused to circulate it.[45] But soon afterwards he published a pamphlet entitled *Official and Public Comments on the Danger Arising from Agricultural Poverty in India,* containing the views of prominent Britons regarding the probability of an agrarian uprising in India, to prove that though Hume's manner of expressing his opinions might have been wrong, he was not unique in holding them. The government of India, who had already secured a copy of Hume's circular of 16 February, though not of the correspondence relating to it, in early March and forwarded it to the secretary of state,[46] was dissuaded by the latter from taking legal action against Hume.[47]

In London, the British Committee of the Congress met in an emergency session on 1 April 1892 and adopted a resolution expressing 'their deep regret that such a letter should have been circulated, and their entire repudiation of the wild language and the unjustifiable conclusions drawn by Mr. Hume'.[48] The resolution was sent to the editor of *The Times* along with a covering note from the members of the Committee which described Hume's letter as 'most injudicious' and said: 'There are statements in Mr. Hume's letter bearing on the great poverty and misery of the agricultural populations of India with which we entirely agree; but it is impossible for us to do other than repudiate the prophecies to which Mr. Hume appears driven in face of the considerations of the deplorable condition of large portions of the Indian people.'[49] As Wedderburn was away in Europe at the time, the meeting of the Committee was chaired by W.S. Caine. The other members present were Naoroji,[50] Charles E. Schwann, and John Adam.[51] The letter to *The Times* was also signed by two other members of the Committee, namely John Ellis and W.S.B. McLaren.[52]

A Tory M.P., J.M. Maclean, who had at one time been editor of the *Bombay Gazette,* referred to the circular in the Commons on 25 April 1892 and said that Hume 'under any less

mild rule than our own would have been hanged or shot as a traitor'.[53] In a letter dated 27 April 1892 and addressed to the editor of *The Times,* Hume denied the charge and maintained that 'far from inciting any one to rise against the Government, the whole purport and object of my letter was to stir up the Congress party, or in other words the Constitutional party, to strenuous exertions in order to secure those ameliorations in the condition of the masses in India that can alone avert the catastrophe with which the growing poverty, misery, and discontent of the people threaten us, to make clear to them that their interests are indissolubly interlocked with ours, and to induce them to treat the Government with greater confidence, and not hide from their rulers the facts of which they are thoroughly cognisant'. Hume went on to say: 'I have been through the Indian Mutiny, and know what it was. I have seen one period of anarchy in India, and I do not want to see another. I have lived 43 years in India. I have served in the Administration from the lowest to all but the highest grade, and since my retirement have moved amongst the Indians in every province of the Empire, for some 11 years, in a way that no other European living has done. I affirm, and the people of India will ratify my assertion, that there is no man, European or Indian, at this present day who possesses such an intimate knowledge of what is going on below the surface among the masses of India as I do. I have a right to be heard, and when I warn the people of India, and of England, of the impending danger, it is futile to meet my assertions by personal charges that are manifestly absurd.'[54] Hume was, however, persuaded by the British Committee, especially in view of the remonstrances from India,[55] to withdraw his draft 'Introduction' to the report of the seventh Congress. At the Committee's instructions, William Digby wrote a fresh 'Introduction' which was published as part of the report concerned after receiving the Committee's approval.[56]

The storm over Hume's 'seditious' circular soon blew over, but it seriously undermined his authority as the supreme leader of the Congress and left the party badly divided and demoralized.

At the 1894 session at Madras, a large number of delegates, particularly those from Bengal and Madras, took strong objection to Eardley Norton, a local barrister and prominent European supporter of the Congress, taking part in the proceedings because he had only recently been charged with adultery. With the Parnell incident in the United Kingdom still fresh in public memory, the objectors insisted that to allow Norton to play a leading role in Congress affairs was not only undesirable in itself, it might also alienate English sympathy for the movement. The behaviour of the president of the session, Alfred Webb, in disallowing the objection, added fuel to the fire and it was with great difficulty that a split was avoided.[57]

At the Amraoti session in 1897 a resolution condemning Tilak's conviction for sedition earlier in the year had to be dropped because 'the most influential of the Congress leaders refused ... to have anything to do with it. If it had been pressed, a serious split might have ensued.'[58] At the same session a proposal in the subjects committee meeting to include Gokhale's name among the speakers at the Congress was greeted with jeers by several delegates, especially from Bengal, who believed that he had brought disgrace to the entire nation by his recent public apology in connexion with a statement he had made while in England in July 1897 regarding the plague operations in Poona.[59]

Tilak's decision soon after his release in 1898 to attend the forthcoming session of the Congress at Madras made some leading moderate and loyalist Congressmen abstain from attending the gathering. For example, P.M. Mehta let it be known in mid-December 1898 that he might 'feel it ... [his] duty to stay away if Mr. Tilak attends the Congress'.[60] Sankaran Nair

felt similarly to Mehta and entertained the same sentiments, but he thought the moderates should muster strong at Madras 'lest anything foolish be done by the Congress'.[61] He wrote to Mehta on 18 December 1898: 'In smooth water the Congress does not need Mr. Bonnerjee or you. But if in critical times you are absent the Congress will drift into the hands of men we may not like. Allow me to remind you of the advice Gladstone gave our delegates [in 1890], never to allow the disloyalists to get the better of us. If you and others like you come here, you may depend upon it the Congress will listen to us. If it does not, and the Congress does anything savouring of disloyalty in spite of your advice it will be time for you and those who think like you, myself for instance, to leave the Congress to shift for itself.'[62] Though Mehta could not be persuaded to go to Madras, the managers of the 1898 Congress not only saw to it that Tilak did not speak from the platform, but also foiled an attempt by Tilak's supporters to pass a resolution expressing sympathy for their martyred leader.[63]

Early in 1899 Congressmen, especially in eastern and western India, were sorely divided over the condemnation by the Calcutta and Bombay standing committees of S.M. Paranjpe of Poona for his attempted justification of political assassination in his Marathi weekly, the *Kal*.[64]

The managers of the Congress incurred the displeasure of Tilak and his Maharashtrian associates at the Lucknow session of 1899 for disallowing a resolution condemning Lord Sandhurst's governorship of Bombay.[65] Similarly, they offended many Panjab Congressmen by refusing to take up for discussion at the 1899 and 1900 Congress sessions an official measure which sought to restrict the alienation of land by sale or mortgage in Panjab.[66] The manner in which P.M. Mehta and W.C. Bonnerjee suppressed the Indian Congress Committee at the Calcutta Congress of 1901 gave still greater offence to Panjab Congressmen and they virtually seceded from the Congress for a couple of years.[67]

At the 1903 session of the Congress held at Madras, the president, L.M. Ghose, whose election to the presidency had itself given rise to some controversy, publicly referred to the existence of 'factions and cliques' in the organization and warned Congress leaders by implication to 'be especially careful that their own acts may not be condemned as autocratic by the rank and file of our party'.[68]

Students of political parties know how they are subject to the iron law of oligarchy.[69] The Congress was no exception to this general rule. It is difficult to see how the Congress, especially in its early phase, could have survived without the governance and guidance of a small number of determined and dedicated men. But the manner in which a handful of influential and devoted persons decided where the Congress was to meet each year, who were to be its office-bearers, what subjects it was to take up for discussion and agitation, and how it was to raise its funds and spend them, often gave rise to serious dissatisfaction among those who did not belong to 'the inner circle'.

Soon after the Congress was launched, complaints about the behaviour of its managers began to be heard. At the 1886 Congress at Calcutta many delegates objected to 'anything like a cut-and-dried list of business prepared by a handful of men sitting at their desk in the rooms of some association'.[70] On 8 January 1890 the *Indian Mirror* wrote: 'We are ... of opinion that there should be no sort of autocracy in the Congress, and that it should not be turned into Mr. Hume's Congress or Mr. Bonnerji's Congress or Pandit Ajudhyanath's Congress or the Congress of Mr. Norton or Mr. Adam; but so long as the Congress is allowed to remain without a well-defined constitution and rules to regulate its proceedings, such things, as we wish to guard against, and at present give rise to complaints, will continue to exist.'[71]

At the height of the Age of Consent Bill controversy in 1891 the *Mahratta* remarked that Hume was 'as great a despot in the Congress camp as any satrap was in the days of old'.[72] It was, however, careful to explain that the remark was not an attack on Hume but on 'the helplessness of Congress movers'.[73] 'The Congress continues to be held every year', said the paper, 'and we have its yearly proceedings because Mr. Hume does it all. ... The leaders will not move and if Mr. Hume does not look to the smallest detail nobody knows where the magnificent edifice would crack and give way. ... If Mr. Hume is, therefore, despotic it is because he cannot help being so. ... But no movement which depends for its life upon the single-handed work of one man can be expected to be permanent ... We, therefore, think the time has arrived when every endeavour ought to be made to place the institution under the care of a strong committee and removed from the rule of one man.'[74]

Again, in 1895, during the controversy over the use of the Congress pavilion at Poona by the Social Conference, the *Mahratta* asked the people of Maharashtra to 'decide whether the Congress shall be an institution of the people or whether it would be an institution of the clique who make the people their sport and declare that they shall speak to order'.[75]

Gradually, those who were dissatisfied with the Congress high command—for personal or public reasons—began to coalesce and combine. The existence of factions among Congressmen in almost every region hastened the process, for the discontented men in one region sought for and found allies elsewhere in the country. The question of giving a constitution to the Congress was best calculated to bring about a polarization in the movement. Those who were the most vocal in demanding a constitution for the Congress were, generally speaking, Congressmen who did not have a say in Congress affairs at either the regional or the national level. They favoured a constitution because they were opposed to the existing oligarchy. And they reinforced their demand for a democratic control of the organization with all sorts of suggestions for improving its ideals, objectives and methods. By first granting a constitution in 1899 and then suppressing it in 1901, the managers of the Congress showed a lamentable combination of weakness and high-handedness which was immediately exploited by their adversaries. By the turn of the century the demand for a constitution was no longer confined to a few disgruntled Congressmen, it had become the battle-cry of dissidence and protest in the movement all over the country which was to gain in volume and intensity with the passage of each year.

As early as 1900-1 it was clear to the more knowledgeable and far-seeing among the Indian nationalists that the older and moderate leaders of the Congress were losing their hold on the movement and the organization and that it was only a matter of time before they would be overwhelmed by the younger and radical elements. Giving his impressions of the Lahore Congress of 1900 a 'Special Representative of the *Indian Spectator*' wrote: 'It is becoming clear day by day that, in the counsels of the movement, the forces which make for sound politics are not making head. There is even at present a numerical preponderance of those who would like to see the Congress take a racial or religious colour, and when the personal influence of the handful of veteran leaders of the movement disappears, as it is bound to do in course of time, nothing, so far as we can see, can prevent the present numerical preponderance from being translated into a moral one.'[76]

Lajpat Rai's article, containing a severe criticism of the existing Congress methods and objectives and advocating the establishment of 'a Hindu political or semi-political Congress or Conference', in the November 1901 issue of the *Kayastha Samachar,* prompted the *Indian*

Social Reformer to remark that the Indian National Congress had arrived at the parting of the ways. The antagonism within the movement was, it said, 'reaching a crucial stage and the maintenance of an outward unity cannot be secured any longer without concessions involving essential principles, which would leave both parties without a motive of [*sic*] action'. The real meaning and goal of the revivalists were not apparent so long as they confined themselves to social matters. 'It is in its application to politics that the underlying principle of their creed must show itself in all its nakedness.' The *Indian Social Reformer* pointed out that all the movements which had started fifteen or twenty years ago in India 'assumed or aspired towards a union of all races inhabiting this country in a common nationality'. Recently, however, 'a new party which also calls itself "National" has arisen in politics as in social reform, but its "nationalism" is in every respect contrary to that of 15 years ago. Then it meant Indian first and everything else afterwards. Now it means everything else first and Indian nowhere. ... Everywhere one finds representatives of the desire to close the ranks and treat the neighbouring communities as strangers and aliens.' The paper looked upon 'the separatist tendency with disgust and despair' and reaffirmed its belief 'that the policy which would go back on the present in utter disregard of modern conditions and of the manifold interests which have gathered into them, would seek to construct a patriotism exclusively Hindu as regards history, modes of thought and spirit of institutions, is a short-sighted one, calculated to retard enlightened progress'. The article concluded: 'It seems to us that the time is come when the two parties should cease to raise the coward cry of "unity" where there is no unity and agree to part, as far as possible in a friendly way, each to work out its own doctrines after its own proper methods. The forced attempt at conformity has so far only succeeded in paralysing the more pronouncedly progressive movements which are deserving of much greater sympathy and support from all friends of reform.'[77]

Commenting on the manner in which one or two Congress leaders had chosen S.N. Banerjea to be president of the forthcoming Ahmedabad Congress without even the formality of consulting Congress committees in different parts of the country, the *Hindu* remarked on 23 October 1902: 'Individuals acting in this manner are apt to be carried away by their personal predilections, and to them the sense of the country is not always of very much account. If matters proceeded at this rate, and if the general wishes of Congressmen all over the country are not duly consulted, we fear that the success of the Congress will in the future be materially affected and its popularity will suffer. We are sure that our leaders have sufficient sense of responsibility to remember that in working a huge organisation like the Congress anything done in its name should have the general adherence of the people at large. But of late it has too much become the fashion for people to be compelled to acquiesce in arrangements already made, as a matter of policy and expediency. This kind of thing cannot long go on without impairing the strength of the Congress; and we appeal to Congressmen all over the country to seriously consider whether we should not devise some method whereby every important step taken in the name of the Congress may be made to receive the general concurrence of the country beforehand.'[78]

Writing about the Ahmedabad Congress of 1902, the *Indian Social Reformer* remarked that 'the increasing isolation of the movement from outside life was never so perceptible as at the meeting at Ahmedabad'. The rising generation had become indifferent to it and 'the present lethargy is due to a growing disbelief in the present methods of this organisation rather than in a failure to recognise its ultimate significance'.[79] Noticing the meagre attendance at the 1902

Congress, the *Madras Standard* said: 'There is evidently something requiring reform in the present methods, and we trust that, whatever it may be, it will not be too long delayed.'[80]

In two letters to the editor of the *Tribune* in September-October 1903, Dwarka Dass, a prominent Congressman from Ambala, described in detail how the Congress was run by an oligarchy. 'The fact is,' he wrote, 'that the affairs of the Congress are really guided and controlled by one or two small cliques of men, who, while they pretend to now and then give to their procedure an appearance of constitutionalism, practically do everything important in their own way. The resolutions which are brought before the Subjects Committee or the Congress are really their work. They can be induced to listen to nothing which is against their cherished views or which does not for some reason or other find favour with them. They find no difficulty in summarily putting down every one who thinks of taking up an adverse position to them, and they know how to make short of any proposals which proceed from such a quarter. They sit on either side of the president, both in the meeting of the Subjects Committee and of the Congress, and they continue constantly to lead and control that gentleman. And as he is, as a rule, their nominee, they find it a very easy task to impose all their wishes on him. Sometimes he becomes such a pliable instrument in their hands that he produces, by his weakness, a feeling of disgust and revulsion among some of the Congress delegates. But as the gentlemen pulling the strings always contrive to give to the show a splendid winding up, and as the dramatic effects produced by some of the actors appeal very strongly to the sentiments of the audience, every one in the end seems to feel satisfied that a successful session of the Congress is over. But the thinking portion of the Congress is being, every year in increasing numbers, alienated by the high-handed proceedings of some of the leaders. Some of these latter gentlemen are men of high ambitions, and a satisfaction of their desires is what they, above all things, keep prominently before their minds. To attain this purpose they have generally to adopt a policy of some kind towards the other Congressmen. And it is the pursuit of this policy which, whenever it is opposed to the real interests of the Congress, compels them to throw to the winds all ideas of decency and propriety in the management of Congress affairs.'[81] In his second letter on the same subject Dwarka Dass traced the history of how this oligarchy had come to dominate the Congress. In the early days everything was managed by a few persons. They came to acquire full control of the Congress and became its sole masters. Their idea of their own importance grew and they became exceedingly autocratic. The yoke was felt by several self-respecting men to be too galling. In order to check the arbitrary powers of the leaders, they demanded the formation of an executive committee which would initiate and formulate proposals. Such an executive committee did not suit the taste of those who had enjoyed arbitrary powers. Within two years of its establishment it was brought to an end at the Calcutta Congress of 1901 and Panjab's threat of secession was treated with contempt. Dwarka Dass believed that the members of the Congress oligarchy were so strongly wedded to their own views and regarded themselves so immensely superior to other Congressmen that unless drastic measures were taken there was no chance of bringing them to their senses. 'The truth is,' he went on to say, 'that though the study of English, especially of English history, has made the minds of some of us familiar with the abstract concepts of liberty and constitutionalism, we have not yet been able to drop those fetters of mental slavery which have so long kept our minds incarcerated within their narrow cells. ... we are still strongly apt to become tyrants the moment our own self-assertion or the indulgence of our friends affords us the necessary opportunity.'[82]

It was a rather frightened M. Viraraghava Chariar, a prominent member of the Congress oligarchy from Madras, who wrote to P.M. Mehta on 10 November 1903: 'Everybody now wants change in the working of the Congress ... as there is some fear of a disturbance, I am very anxious that you should visit Madras this year and guide the vessel clear of storm.'[83] In a private communication to Gokhale, dated 2 January 1904, Wacha, a friend and admirer of Mehta, described in detail how at the subjects committee meeting at Madras in late December 1903, Mehta 'knocked the bottom of the Constitution-mongering folk'. 'You would have admired his performance and way of managing the intransigents. Young and hot-headed [Asuthosh] Choudhry [from Calcutta] had a passage at arms. Here both lost their temper. Of course P.M. M. [Pherozeshah M. Mehta] had the best of it. ... That evening made it clear to all that there was not a man in the entire country who could so successfully *lead* men as P.M.M. He proved it to the hilt that for Congress under present conditions there is only *one* leader—*a born one*—and that is P.M.M.'[84] Another correspondent, H.N. Apte, writing on the same subject, informed Gokhale that the Madras Congress had been 'anything but successful'. The delegates from Bengal and Madras were particularly eager to lay down a constitution for the Congress. Mehta, with his tact and skill, silenced them, but the effect was temporary. Bengal threatened not to send delegates to the 1904 Congress. It was generally believed that local organizations would waken only if asked by a central committee. 'However,' Apte went on to say, 'one thing was quite apparent at the Madras session—the younger generation was not satisfied with the working of the Congress and there was a hankering after something new—some new element being put into it—although nobody could say what it was that was wanted. The suggestions that were put forth were either very vague or impractical.'[85] The *Mahratta's* comment on Mehta's performance at Madras was that 'though everyone admired his tact few admired his temper',[86] and that 'he drove it [the subjects committee] rather than led it'.[87]

All through 1904 the controversy over the methods and objectives of the Congress raged in India and the session scheduled to be held at Bombay in the December of that year promised to be a stormy one. In October 1904 Wacha wrote to Bonnerjee, Naoroji and Wedderburn complaining 'about the attitude adopted by Tilak towards the Congress. Evidently he is now for flying his own standard and be the leader of a new party.'[88] It was obviously at Wacha's suggestion that Naoroji wrote to Tilak on 2 November 1904: '... the National Congress has become our war weapon in the field of future politics. The National Congress is not perfect today. But gradually we wish to make it stronger. It is understood that through the *Kesari* you are pushing it down. If it is once weakened in this manner and sustains injury, then it will take a long time for us to make repairs. In our struggle against the Government we must all be of one heart. Criticism should be friendly and constructive. If Congress is broken then it will be a great disaster to India, and a great triumph for the Anglo-Indian people. Stay in Bombay and place your suggestions before the Subjects Committee, and let all abide by the majority decision.'[89] In his reply, dated 6 December 1904, Tilak told Naoroji that he had been misinformed about his attitude towards the Congress and added: '... let me assure you, once for all, that I have never been, nor am I in any way against the Congress. Constitutional agitation, I shall be the last person to decry. But I am rather sanguine by temperament, and think that we must push our efforts to their logical extreme. I firmly believe—and let me tell you that you yourself have been the principal cause of this belief—that if we wish to get any rights or privileges we must agitate in England in a missionary spirit. The Anglo-Indians here won't listen to what we say. ... I do not mean to say that the Congress work in India is entirely

useless. But I do maintain that without persistent work in England carried on by our own men, mere annual gatherings in India would be of no avail. ... Last year when you and Mr. Hume issued your appeal—Call to Arms—I took it up and urged it upon the attention of the Congress leaders in India, with all my heart and zeal. The *Kesari* wrote a leader on the subject and goaded the Congressmen to take up the suggestion seriously. What I then said was that the annual session of the Congress is like the croaking of frogs in the rains only a seasonal activity; and we cannot hope to gain much by it unless our efforts are supplemented by a persistent agitation in England. ... I am sorry to say that this sort of plain-speaking is distasteful to most of our Congress leaders here. Of the elders I do not think anyone is prepared to sacrifice a few years of his life for this purpose; nor are they willing to organize a mission for the same. Under these circumstances, it is natural that they should set me down for an anti-Congressman. ... After 20 Congress sittings in India, the time has certainly arrived when we should take a step in advance and push home the ball set in motion by yourself, Mr. Hume and others. If we fail in this we shall be failing in our duty to our motherland. Are we prepared for this? What shall I say—you know it best. The only way to get privileges is to make it impossible for the English people to ignore our efforts. But where are the men to do it? That is what I have been asking; and if this goes against the Congress, I fail to see what would be in its favour. ... I shall see Sir W. Wedderburn at the time of the Congress and explain to him the real situation. I have attended most of the Congress sessions, and I am going to attend the coming one also.'[90]

The presence of Henry Cotton and William Wedderburn at the 1904 Congress at Bombay[91] served to keep down the temperature of the meeting. In his presidential address Cotton advised Congressmen to revere and follow their leaders and to avoid internal divisions. 'I speak in no unfriendly spirit', he said, 'when I warn you of the risks you run by petty internal bickerings and dissensions, by unworthy jealousies and ignoble depreciation of the life-long labours of the foremost men of your generation. It is here I lay my finger on the weakness of your organisation. These signs of frailty are natural, inevitable in the nascent growth of your movement. But they are none the less corroding and dangerous symptoms, the existence of which is undoubted, and which it is, at all costs, the duty of all of you who have the glow of patriotism in your hearts firmly to suppress and eradicate.'[92] Both Cotton and Wedderburn tried to create an atmosphere of cordiality and harmony at the 1904 Congress. Panjab was brought back to the Congress fold. The old strategy, the old demands, and the old faith were reaffirmed. As chairman of the reception committee, P.M. Mehta refuted the charge 'that we are only spasmodically wasting our energies, that this Congress gathering is only a show and a "saturnalia of uncouth oratory", and that we are wantonly and extravagantly throwing away on an evanescent *tamasha*, monies which could be devoted to more solid and useful purposes'.[93] He insisted that 'there is no purpose more important, no mission more sacred, than the one that the Congress fulfils in the three short days to which it confines its session. It would be absurd to say that the Congress meets to deliberate and discuss and decide all the important subjects with which it deals. That task must be, and is, largely performed in the course of the year by such institutions as we may possess for forming Indian public opinion, in the common intercourse of social life, in local bodies more or less active, in the Native Press which is undoubtedly daily growing more and more capable and potent. At the end of the year, we all meet together, from different parts of the country, representatives of the people ... to give voice to the public opinion of the country taking shape and formulating throughout the year, to present our Petition of Rights, our Grand Remonstrance ... .'[94]

The 1904 session may well be said to have marked the end of an epoch in the history of the Congress. It was the last of the old-style sessions: the cracks which were papered over at Bombay in 1904 reappeared in an aggravated form at Banaras in 1905. Curzon's partition of Bengal in 1905 and the unprecedented agitation to which it gave rise only aided an on-going process that was transforming the character of the Congress both as a movement and as an organization. Significantly enough, the Banaras Congress was presided over by India's 'Grand Young Man',[95] G.K. Gokhale. 'Let us hope', Wacha had written to Gokhale on 28 October 1905, 'that this year of the majority of the Congress will be, as it ought to be, an epoch-making one ... .'[96] Wacha's hope was fulfilled, though in a manner which he could have hardly liked. On 18 December 1905 the *Panjabee* wrote editorially: 'The hour of the inevitable parting of the ways has come for our National Assembly and the next fortnight will show whether that body decides to take advantage of the fresh hopes with which the people are imbued and the new heart which beats in their breasts and to launch out on a bold but perfectly legitimate policy, or elects to sign its own death-warrant and ring its own death-knell.'[97]

For months preceding the Banaras Congress of 1905 an animated controversy had been going on in India—both in the press and on the platform—as to whether or not the Congress should approve of and adopt the *swadeshi* and boycott agitation launched in Bengal as a counter to Curzon's partition of that province. Opinion on the subject was sharply divided. Though a large number of politically-conscious Indians favoured the *swadeshi* and boycott movement, most of the older and moderate leaders of the Congress, particularly those from Bombay, were bitterly opposed to it. The president-elect, G.K. Gokhale, stood mid-way between the two warring groups and was inclined to give a qualified support to the movement. P.M. Mehta believed that Gokhale was playing into the hands of his enemies and decided to stay away from the Banaras Congress.[98] The draft resolutions circulated by the reception committee of the Banaras Congress made no mention of the subject. [99]

On 27 December 1905, the day the Banaras session began, A.N. Ray and other delegates from Bengal asked the president, Gokhale, for his approval of 'agitation by boycott' and requested that the 'present Congress should express its opinion in unmistakable terms as to whether or not boycott is a legitimate means of constitutional agitation and as such deserving of sympathy'.[100] According to a report published in the *Indian Empire,* when the subjects committee came to tackle the business, 'certain gentlemen proposed that all reference to Bengal should be omitted from the programme'. This made the delegates from Bengal furious and Tilak and Lajpat Rai threw their weight on the side of the Bengalis. 'The Bengal and Mahratta delegates threatened to wash their hands of the Congress unless the question that was one of life and death to them, was included in the programme of the Congress. ... The Congress had to follow one of the two alternatives. They had to choose between Sir Pherozeshah Mehta on the one hand, and the whole body of the Bengalee and the Mahratta delegates on the other. It thus came about that Mr. Madan Mohun Malaviya, despite his anti-Bengalee tendencies, drafted a Resolution bearing on the subject. It was settled that the Resolution would be submitted at the meeting of the Congress that was to follow next morning. Conceive, then, of the surprise of the Bengal and Deccan delegates when in looking over the agenda paper they found the discussion and resolution of the previous night quietly ignored and dropped out. They rose up in anger and resolved to shake the dust of the Congress off their feet.' At this stage S.N. Banerjea intervened and went and saw Gokhale, who explained that the omission was due to an oversight and promised to let the question come up for discussion in due course. An announcement in this

regard was received with 'loud manifestations of joy' and 'shouts of *Bandemataram*' by the Bengal delegates. The wording of the resolution on boycott was clearly the result of a compromise. Tilak, Lajpat Rai and many Bengal delegates wanted the Congress to adopt a resolution 'openly supporting the boycott of foreign goods and commending the same to the country', but 'timid counsels prevailed' and it was 'considered good policy not to commit the Congress too openly to boycott and tax the good will of its Anglo-Indian supporters too cruelly'.[101]

The resolution which was finally adopted read as follows: 'That this Congress records its earnest and emphatic protest against the repressive measures which have been adopted by the authorities in Bengal after the people there had been compelled to resort to the boycott of foreign goods as a last protest, and perhaps the only constitutional and effective means left to them of drawing the attention of the British public to the action of the Government of India in persisting in their determination to partition Bengal, in utter disregard of the universal prayers and protests of the people.'[102]

Another controversial question cropped up rather unexpectedly at the Banaras Congress. After Gokhale's presidential address on the opening day, 27 December 1905, the subjects committee met in the evening to discuss and decide upon the business of the Congress for the following days. The first resolution which it took up for consideration related to welcoming the Prince and the Princess of Wales to India and it generated a good deal of heat. The story is best told in the words of a leading actor in the drama, Lajpat Rai: 'I opposed the resolution. Severe famine prevailed in the country and people were dying of hunger; besides the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon had created great unrest. To call the Prince of Wales at this moment was a bureaucratic subterfuge, the intention of the inviters being to allay political unrest by diverting public attention to gala shows. Bal Gangadhar Tilak stood by me. The discussion took up a good deal of time. All the old leaders of the Congress were against us. Only a few Bengalis, Punjabis and Marhattas were on our side. At last the resolution was carried by a majority, but we announced immediately that we would oppose it again in the general meeting of the National Congress. This enraged the older leaders, and the U.P. leaders were frightened. Information was sent the same night to the Commissioner, the Officer Commanding and the Police Superintendent of Banaras. The next morning Munshi Madholal [chairman of the reception committee] of Banaras brought the Deputy Commissioner to the Pandal. They had begun to fear that there might be some rioting, and were making preparations accordingly. We were dubbed sedition-mongers and 'badmashes' [bad characters]. The whole of that night and the next morning this situation remained the topic of discussion. Threats were held out to us in the morning. Some said we were bringing the province into disgrace, others feared the Congress would be dead. So on and so forth. But our resolve remained unaffected. Now it was 11 o'clock. The time for the Congress sitting had arrived. But Gokhale did not turn up. The news came that he was busy in confabulations. At last Gokhale arrived, but instead of going to the Congress Pandal he began to persuade me. I told him our difference was one of principle. When he found me inexorable he made a personal appeal to me and asked me to waive opposition for his sake. To this I agreed and gave him a promise that we would abstain from attending the sitting whilst this resolution was being dealt with so that we might not have to oppose it; the understanding was that in the record it would not be said that the resolution was accepted unanimously. I got Tilak to agree to this understanding. But the young Bengalis, J.N. Roy and R. Ray, would not agree in any case. So they had to be kept out by force. Thus was the welcome resolution carried.'[103]

The Moderate leaders of the Congress could not have committed a greater blunder than to have agreed to the holding of the 1906 Congress at Calcutta. 'If the signs of the times had been noted correctly,' wrote the *Hindu,* 'there was sufficient evidence in the proceedings of the Subjects Committee and of the Congress in Benares to warn the leaders that the holding of the Congress in Calcutta would be attended with untoward results and that a quieter atmosphere than that of Calcutta was to be preferred.'[104] Already, in 1905, Bengal in general and Calcutta in particular were in an extremely disturbed state because of the anti-partition agitation, and the situation worsened in 1906. It was thus described by Gokhale in September 1906: 'Calcutta has been for some time past a regular pandemonium. Surendranath's inexcusable excesses, the *Patrika*'s vindictive pursuit of Mr. Surendranath, the fierce quarrel between Surendranath and Bipin Chandra Pal and the latter's unscrupulous ambition to play at all costs the role of a new leader, Anglo-Indian ferocity let loose against Indians, Mahomedan ill-will stirred up against the Hindus, and the offence given by the Hindu-Mahomedan dinner to orthodox Hindus—all of these have created in Calcutta a situation from which the Congress cannot hope to escape without serious injury. The only man who seems to retain a head on his shoulders is Mr. Bhupendranath Bose. But for the past two or three years his influence has been rapidly on the wane, and his position is a most difficult one—Bipin Chandra Pal unscrupulously assailing him on one side and Surendranath resenting the curbs which he puts on him on the other. The preparations for the Congress have not yet been taken in hand, though we are now at the end of September. A huge unwieldly so-called reception committee, consisting of anybody and everybody, was no doubt formed two months ago, but no care was taken in regard to the men that were put on it, any name that was handed in being accepted. The result is that neither Surendranath nor Bipin Chandra knows which side has a majority on the reception committee and they are both postponing the election of an executive or working committee out of this body, as that means the first open trial of strength between the two parties. Then the President difficulty is not yet over. Bipin Chandra Pal has wired to Dadabhai [Naoroji], asking him not to accept a sectional offer and threatening to run Mr. Tilak against him. Finally even if all arrangements for the next Congress are completed in time and the Congress does meet in Calcutta during next Christmas, there will be great trouble about the programme of work. Bipin Chandra Pal and his party are working hard to get a large contingent of delegates on their side and they want to sweep the present programme of the Congress clean off the board and substitute in its place only three resolutions, the first declaring our inherent right to govern ourselves and demanding autonomy, absolute, immediate, free from foreign control; the second calling upon all Congressmen to withdraw their sons and wards from all Government institutions and make independent provision for their education, so that the rising generation should grow up full of determination to wrest complete autonomy from England; and the third advocating not only Swadeshism in the industrial field but a comprehensive boycott against everything English—English goods, Government Schools and Colleges, Government Service, honorary offices and so forth—so that the only points of contact between the Government and the people should be those of violent hatred. This is the programme of the new Bengal Party and they profess that they will make no compromise with anyone who proposes to agitate for mere reforms as the success of such agitation would mean an improved and therefore prolonged foreign rule. They are claiming Mr. Tilak as their leader, though we all know that he does not believe in the practicability of their programme, only as is his wont, he will do nothing to discourage their belief that he is their leader. When the Congress meets, if it meets at all in

Calcutta, we must be prepared for violent scenes and disorderly attempts to make its work on old lines impossible. It is sad, inexpressibly sad, that all this should occur at the very moment when the Viceroy and the Secretary of State are contemplating an important step forward. It may be that we are after all, as an ancient writer says, "the mere sport of an aimless destiny". Two streams of feeling are at present mingling their currents together against the Congress. One is the dissatisfaction as regards the absence of anything like a constitution for it, and the other is the repudiation of its very ideal. The first feeling, as you know so well, is widespread throughout the country and I think that steps ought to be taken this year to conciliate it and thus prevent Pal's party from taking advantage of it for their own purposes. The other feeling of course is one in regard to which there can be no compromise and we who are not prepared to allow our imagination to run away with our judgement must stiffen our backs and fight it tooth and nail. I think the whole of Madras, two-thirds of Bombay, the whole of United Provinces, two-thirds of Punjab, two-thirds of Central Provinces and about half of Bengal are with us in this matter. It is our duty at this crisis to put forth the whole of our strength and make it clear to the world that whatever a small knot of unthinking men may say, the Congress as such has no aspirations except such as may be realised within the British Empire. Any hesitation on our part in this matter will put us back by a quarter of a century and land us in inextricable confusion. The new Secretary of State and the new House of Commons are prepared to help us much more than is generally believed in this country, but they will have nothing to do with the Congress if that body allows its position to be compromised by Pal and his party. It is true that for the present we can do nothing but watch the situation. But the time may soon come for definite action either in Calcutta or at different centres throughout India, and I hope we shall not fail to rise to the responsibilities of the occasion.'[105] Gokhale had not only very ably summed up the situation in Calcutta, he had also clearly indicated the Moderate strategy to meet it.

As the time for the 1906 session of the Congress drew near the differences between the Moderates and the Extremists, particularly in Bengal, increased and sharpened. The Moderates left no stone unturned in order to meet the Extremist challenge. Between September and November 1906 the Bengal Moderates outmanoeuvred their adversaries on two counts, though they did so in an apparently unconstitutional manner. If either Lajpat Rai or Tilak, whom the Bengal Extremists had come to favour, were elected president of the forthcoming Congress, it would have appeared that the opposition had scored a great victory. To avoid that, S.N. Banerjea and B.N. Basu, in consultation with the Moderate leaders in Bombay, but 'without consulting the Reception Committee or the Standing Congress Committee', as they should have done, offered the presidency of the Calcutta Congress to Dadabhai Naoroji in September 1906.[106] Some Extremists denounced the unconstitutional manner in which the offer was made. B.C. Pal even wrote to Naoroji saying that unless he stepped down from the presidency, he would run Tilak against him openly.[107] But this move was scotched by Tilak himself.[108] Naoroji accepted the presidency and the Extremists reconciled themselves to it with a wise resignation. In November 1906 the Moderate leaders of Bengal succeeded in getting elected an executive committee of the reception committee—for attending to the arrangements of the Calcutta session—in which they had 'an overwhelming majority'.[109] Their opponents complained that this had been done by bringing forward at short notice the date fixed for the meeting of the reception committee from 18 November to 11 November and thus virtually preventing the members living far from Calcutta from attending it.[110]

The Moderate leaders not only tried to rally support from their friends in other provinces, they also tried to divide their opponents. A meeting of the Standing Congress Committee, appointed at the Banaras Congress of 1905, was held in Bombay on 17 and 18 November 1906 in order to discuss the crisis. At this meeting an attempt seems to have been made to throw a few sops to the Extremists by way of possible concessions to some of their main demands, such as a constitution for the Congress. Gokhale used his personal influence with Lajpat Rai to prevent him and his Panjabi friends from aligning themselves firmly with the Bengali and Maharashtrian Extremists. Both the Moderates and the Extremists in Bengal were very keen on four subjects: *swadeshi,* boycott, partition and national education. The reception committee took care that they were included in the list of subjects to be discussed at the forthcoming Congress which it issued on 13 December 1906.[111]

Throughout 1906 the Extremists kept up their offensive. In June Tilak and Khaparde visited Calcutta apparently to participate in the Shivaji festival there, but, in fact, to seek and cement alliances. Khaparde wrote in his diary: 'There are three parties at Calcutta. One is led by Babu Surendranath Banerjea. It is the Moderate party. Then Moti Babu [Moti Lal Ghose] has a party of his own, and the party led by Babu Bipin [Chandra Pal] is the real popular party and corresponds to Tilak's party in Poona. Our advent smoothed the differences of these parties and led to their amalgamation to some extent.'[112] In late June 1906 Khaparde issued a circular letter which was given wide publicity in the press. In it he outlined a programme which he claimed had been 'discussed in a private way' at Banaras in December 1905. The crux of it was that the Congress should have a proper organization for more effective agitation. He also pleaded for the election of Lajpat Rai as president of the forthcoming Congress at Calcutta.[113]

D.E. Wacha felt that though the voice was that of Khaparde, the hand was that of Tilak. He wrote to Gokhale on 21 July 1906: 'Behind all is Tilak who, knowing how he is regarded by the sober section of the Congress party, has been moving heaven and earth to get Lajpat Rai elected for the Presidentship. Today Lajpat Rai and tomorrow Tilak! Where will the Congress be?'[114] Wacha had already written to William Wedderburn in England that 'Bombay will have to reconsider its position towards the Congress if the Extremists are to "capture" the Congress by their unscrupulous strategy'.[115] Wedderburn, to whom both Gokhale and Wacha turned for advice, did not, however, regard Khaparde's circular letter as a very dangerous document. He did not even object to Lajpat Rai becoming president of the Congress, for it might make him realize his responsibilities. He was disturbed by Wacha's threat of Bombay's secession from the Congress. 'This would indeed mean', he wrote to Gokhale on 8 August 1906, 'a break-up. My own idea would be to let Messrs. Tilak and Co. have a trial in the management and honours of the Congress, but, instead of withdrawing, the more careful people should rally their forces and exercise a beneficial control on the Congress meeting.'[116]

Wedderburn was initially inclined to think 'that in the changes in public opinion in India he could not intervene'.[117] But Wacha considered this to be 'a short-sighted policy'. He was convinced that the Extremists were out to capture and ultimately wreck the Congress and the British Committee which 'we have so sedulously fostered and reared'.[118] He had 'lost all faith in the honesty of the purpose of Tilak and Co. They stand revealed today as self-seekers and persons who want to aggrandise themselves by flouting and abusing those who have borne the brunt and heat of the day and who are in order not to allow this splendid organisation to go to the dogs by their underground and overground machinations.'[119] At Wacha's insistence, therefore, Wedderburn wrote to Lajpat Rai and Tilak counselling peace and patience and the

extreme desirability of keeping 'the Congress on the present lines, at any rate until Mr. Morley had time to get his feet on firm ground'.[120]

The Extremists, too, were not inactive. They had the advantage of flowing with the current of public opinion in the country. The gratuitous advice being publicly offered to the Moderates by some Anglo-Indian publicists that they should stick to the old programme of the Congress and repudiate the Extremists was grist to their mill. In October 1906 G.S. Khaparde issued another circular letter dealing with Congress affairs. In this letter he made fun of the new-born love of the Anglo-Indians for the old programme of the Congress. He summed up the current situation in Congress politics 'as being a struggle between what may be called "petitionists" and "let alonists" on the one hand and anti-petitionists and self-exertionists on the other. All the differences between them will on examination be found to reduce themselves to mere matters of method. One believes in doing nothing beyond focusing public opinion, submitting memorials in accord with it and proposing remedies, while the other believes in approaching people and getting them to work together in matters which admit of being specified. The former would have us approach the Government in nearly all matters whereas the latter would insist on working on our own account without invoking the aid of Indian or British administration.' Khaparde believed that 'the immediate object of both is one and the same—to secure as much liberty as possible for the people of India'. He did not want the time and the energies of the people to be wasted in quarrelling over distant ideals, but instead wanted the national attention to be concentrated only on one point: how to 'devise a method which would harmonize the activities of both schools of thought'. But this, he believed, could 'not be achieved by any one side trying to ignore or suppress the other'. Khaparde desired the Congress to reduce its expenditure on the pavilion and the entertainment of delegates, to take up fewer subjects for discussion, to adopt a constitution, and to elect Lajpat Rai as its president for the next session. He also listed the subjects which could be usefully discussed at the forthcoming Calcutta Congress. These were: 'I. Education on lines laid down by the National Council of Education; II. *Swadeshi* in the widest acceptation of the term and including boycott; III. Promotion of Trade Unions and prevention of injustice and hardship to workmen at the hands of employers; IV. Establishing panchayats and associations for the settlement of disputes; V. Devising means by communication with the various associations in the country or otherwise to unify Hindus, Muhammedans and others in parts where such union does not already exist.'[121]

On 11 December 1906 Khaparde issued his third circular letter in which he insisted that there were some questions 'which we think should be definitely considered by the delegates [to the Congress] this year'. The first was 'the demand for a fundamental change in the constitution of the Indian Government such as will make room for some sort of effective popular control of both its legislative and executive functions'. The second related to *swadeshi* and boycott. 'On this subject the Congress should make a more definite pronouncement than what it has hitherto done, recognising the essential correlation that exists between *Swadeshi* and boycott, both in their economic and political aspects.' The third question was that of national education. The fourth was 'of a constitution for the Congress built up from district associations for the present, but aiming ultimately to set up village community as the unit of our organisation, a constitution that will provide for the continuous working of the Congress propaganda ... [and] some sort of practical political education for the people'. Khaparde concluded his letter by saying: 'These views are put before you only tentatively, and are by no means what will have to be finally accepted. But it is absolutely necessary that those who think that a reform of the methods of

Congress, if not also a reconsideration of its professed aims and ideals is necessary, should meet at least a couple of days before the opening of the public session of Congress with a view to discuss[ing] these matters and adopt[ing] a common line of action. Delegates therefore are requested to kindly arrange to be in Calcutta by 23rd December. All communications [are] to be addressed to B.C. Pal, who, with other Calcutta friends of our ways of thinking, joins with me.'[122]

These and other developments were anxiously watched by the Moderate leaders. On 14 December 1906 R.N. Mudholkar of Amraoti wrote to Gokhale: 'The situation in Calcutta and elsewhere is anything but reassuring. The tone of *New India* shows that Bipin Chandra Pal is still intent on mischief. As to what your townsman [Tilak]—the tribune of the people—the new Sivaji—has planned out can more be imagined than discerned. My respected townsman and colleague on the municipality and elsewhere [Khaparde] is arranging to go very early to Calcutta, if possible before the 20th, to see what action should be taken "to put down the moderates who have stolen a march upon the true patriots" recently. This is no mere *gup*. Whether he will do all he threatens is more than I can say. But it is evident there is still that deplorable spirit which places obstinacy and personal vanity above the real, solid, permanent interests of the country.' Mudholkar referred to a telegram appearing in the *Dnyan Prakash* of 13 December 1906 which 'credits the extremists with threatening to wreck the Congress'. Though he himself thought the report was exaggerated, he went on to say: 'But there can be no doubt that the atmosphere of Calcutta, if not of the whole of Bengal, is still highly surcharged with electricity and we can never be sure when a storm may not break over our heads.'[123]

The last week of December 1906 in Calcutta was a time of unusual activity and excitement, with 'a succession of meetings, conferences, private and public discussions'.[124] Probably for the first time in the history of the Congress the dissidents functioned as a distinct group. They had 'a separate camp' of their own where they held frequent meetings, which were addressed by Tilak, Khaparde, Pal, Aurobindo Ghose and Aswini Kumar Dutt.[125] Khaparde noted in his diary: 'We have a clear majority here and a great deal of local support.'[126] As a follow-up to the third Khaparde circular, the Extremists—or the New Party, as they called themselves in Bengal—met in conference on 24 December 1906 and resolved to press for the adoption by the Congress of the following resolutions on the four most important and controversial issues before it, namely, self-government, boycott, *swadeshi,* and national education:

1. Self-government. 'That this Congress declares that the people of India possess the inherent right to have a Government responsible to them alone, and demands that the Government of India be so constituted as to give to the people of the country an effective control over its legislative and executive functions and that no reform short of this can further the true interests of the people of India or meet the requirement of the present situation.'
2. Boycott. 'That this Congress recognising the essential correlation between *Swadeshi* and Boycott both in their economic and political aspects, do recommend the extension of the movement all over the country.'
3. *Swadeshi.* 'That in view of the present unnatural economic and political condition of the country *Swadeshi* has become a forced necessity in India, this Congress therefore recommends for adoption in provinces even other than Bengal the principle of stimulating the production of as many *Swadeshi* articles as practicable by abstaining from the use of any others even at a sacrifice, as it is calculated to promote the political and economic regeneration of India.'

4. National Education. 'That this Congress is of opinion that the time has come when in the interests of the moral and material well-being of the people, as well as for the furtherance of the highest civic ideals of the nation, the present officialized agencies of public instruction should as far as possible be supplanted by indigenous institutions working on national lines, aiming at the preservation and development of the special genius of the people, and subject absolutely to their own control. This Congress therefore strongly recommends the organisation of National Councils of Education like the one instituted already in Bengal, in the other Indian Provinces... .'[127]

The Extremist conference held on 24 December 1906 at Calcutta decided that if the subjects committee of the Congress would not accept their resolutions, then they would move amendments in the open session of the Congress.[128] This would seriously have embarrassed the managers of the Congress who had all these years worked on the principle that, though differences and disagreements could be aired in the privacy of the subjects committee meetings, in the open sessions of the Congress almost complete unity and unanimity should be maintained in order to impress both the government and the public.

On 25 December 1906, a day before the Congress began its sessions, the president-elect, Dadabhai Naoroji, called the leaders of the two factions to the house of his host, the Maharaja of Darbhanga, for a preliminary discussion. Besides enabling the controversial subjects to be identified, the meeting served little useful purpose. There were heated exchanges between Pal, Khaparde and Tilak on the one hand, and Mehta, Malaviya and Gokhale on the other. Naoroji 'did not open his lips during the proceedings'.[129]

The meetings of the subjects committee on 26 and 27 December proved to be stormy ones. Unlike previous years, a very large number of delegates—over six hundred—managed to force their way into the meetings. The Extremists obviously outnumbered the Moderates.[130] Some of the former were noisy, abusive and querulous. They heckled and booed Moderate leaders, particularly P. Mehta, who sat next to the president, D. Naoroji. They tried to divide the house and even staged a walk-out. The subjects which aroused the greatest controversy were *swadeshi* and boycott. The Extremists wanted to give a political colour to the *swadeshi* movement and they insisted that boycott should have both an extended meaning and application. The situation remained tense throughout the session. There were prolonged formal and informal discussions. The resolutions had to be repeatedly altered and amended. Differences of interpretation and opinion were expressed even in the open sessions of the Congress. The skill of peacemakers like D.A. Khare and Lajpat Rai was sorely tried. Lajpat Rai later wrote: 'There is little doubt, that if Dadabhai Naoroji had not occupied the chair, and had I not intervened, all that happened at Surat next year would have happened at the Calcutta Congress.'[131] Lajpat Rai was substantially right. But others besides him and Naoroji helped in saving the situation. Tilak threw his weight on the side of moderation and compromise.[132] The *Indian Mirror* of Calcutta praised 'Mehta's tact and *bonhomie*'.[133] The Moderate leaders in general were tolerant but firm. They avoided a frontal collision with the Extremists, particularly the followers of B.C. Pal and Aurobindo Ghose in Bengal. 'The strategy of Sir P.M. Mehta & Co.', wrote a 'Special Correspondent' of the Anglo-Indian *Times of India,* 'consisted in bringing the mighty gun of U.P. to bear upon poor Bengal.'[134] Even B.C. Pal's bark proved to be worse than his bite, and 'though some of ... [his] followers carried sticks during Congress week', they refrained from using them.[135] Writing in a self-congratulatory spirit, the *Modern Review* attributed the avoidance of a split at Calcutta in December 1906 to 'the peculiarly Indian ... method of the undivided family'.[136]

Most of the Anglo-Indian papers which had been urging the Moderates to disavow the Extremists and secretly wishing for a split in the Congress were naturally disappointed with the outcome of the Calcutta session. The *Englishman* wrote that boycott could not be tolerated and if the Congress encouraged it the Congress would not be tolerated either. 'The one hope of peaceable and settled administration in India', the paper added, 'is that the Congress will now destroy itself. ... the Congress is better dead than alive.'[137]

In order to enable us to judge for ourselves how far the 1906 Congress had yielded to the pressure of the Extremists, the four contentious resolutions relating to self-government, boycott, *swadeshi,* and national education, as they came to be finally adopted at the Calcutta session, are reproduced below:

1. Self-government. 'That this Congress is of opinion that the system of Government obtaining in the Self-Governing British Colonies should be extended to India, and that, as steps leading to it, it urges that the following reforms should be immediately carried out:
   (a) All examinations held in England only should be simultaneously held in India and in England, and that all higher appointments which are made in India should be by competitive examination only;
   (b) The adequate representation of Indians in the Council of the Secretary of State and the Executive Councils of the Viceroy, and of the Governors of Madras and Bombay;
   (c) The expansion of the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils, allowing a larger and truly effective representation of the people and a larger control over the financial and executive administration of the country;
   (d) The powers of Local and Municipal bodies should be extended and official control over them should not be more than what is exercised by the Local Government Board in England over similar bodies.'
2. Boycott. 'That having regard to the fact that the people of this country have little or no voice in its administration, and that their representations to the Government do not receive due consideration, this Congress is of opinion that the Boycott Movement inaugurated in Bengal by way of protest against the partition of that province, was, and is, legitimate.'
3. *Swadeshi.* 'That this Congress accords its most cordial support to the *Swadeshi* movement, and calls upon the people of the country to labour for its success, by making earnest and sustained efforts to promote the growth of indigenous industries and to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities even at some sacrifice.'
4. National Education. 'That in the opinion of this Congress, the time has arrived for the people all over the country earnestly to take up the question of National Education for both boys and girls and organise a system of Education—Literary, Scientific and Technical—suited to the requirements of the country, on national lines and under national control.'[138]

Though at Calcutta in 1906 the Extremists had obviously succeeded in pushing the Congress a little further in the direction in which they wanted it to travel, they had, in fact, not achieved very much. But they gave the impression of having gained a great victory over their rivals. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* described the Calcutta Congress as 'the most successful

Congress' and claimed that the Extremists had 'not only secured a new lease of life for the organization', they had also 'imparted additional vigour to it'.[139] The *Mahratta* wrote that the Congress had emerged from Calcutta 'triumphant and rejuvenated'.[140] The *Bande Mataram* argued that all that the 'forward party' had fought for had 'in substance been conceded'.[141] Khaparde recorded in his diary that 'Sir P. Mehta and all old leaders generally had lost their influence.'[142] Tilak wrote to Shyamji Krishnavarma on 18 January 1907 that 'in spite of Mr. Mehta and his party who mustered strong this year, we were able to carry out 3/4 of our programme in the Congress'.[143] It was, therefore, not surprising that the Extremists faced the future with increased hope and confidence.

On the other hand, the Moderates, though they had apparently not conceded very much to the Extremists at the Calcutta Congress, felt dejected and pessimistic and faced the future with anxiety and apprehension. As B.R. Nanda rightly observes: 'The Calcutta Congress revealed that the respect and even the awe in which the Founding Fathers of the Congress had long been held were fast evaporating. Pherozeshah Mehta had to swallow insults from schoolboys; Surendranath Banerjea was humiliated by the discovery that he was no longer the eloquent charmer he had been. When he raised his voice to command attention, the students shouted him down. "What, in my own city, it has come to this!" he shrieked. "Yes", the Pal-ites shouted back, "it has come to this." ... The Moderates left Calcutta with mingled feelings of bewilderment, humiliation and dismay. It was not so much the resolutions on *swadeshi* and boycott, but the way they were pushed through that worried them. Gone was the genteel decorum of a gathering which had hitherto conducted itself as if it was an unofficial Parliament of India. Acrimonious argument and open conflict had replaced quiet diplomacy and consensus through friendly negotiations.'[144] Writing immediately after the Calcutta Congress was over, a correspondent of the *Hindu* remarked: 'For the time being, the so-called Moderates seem to have had the upper hand, but we are afraid there is no means of checking the spread of the views and opinions of the much-abused Extremists... .'[145]

The Moderate leaders' anxiety and apprehension worsened as the year 1907 rolled by. It contrasted with their mood of the preceding year and it formed an important element in bringing about the split at Surat in December 1907. In 1906 the Moderate leaders were anxious that the Congress should present a united front to the government, particularly to the new viceroy, Minto, and the new secretary of state, Morley, of whom they had great expectations. They even hoped to make some use of the Extremists. For example, in October 1906, R.N. Mudholkar wrote to G.K. Gokhale. 'The way in which Pal and even Tilak write is such as to rouse the ire of sober men. I don't want to conceal that whenever I read their vapourings I lose my patience. But this anger is only short-lived. I then say to myself. They represent a phase of thought which is as real as the opinions I hold as true. They are looking at one side of the shield and we look at the other. ... But they have one thing which I find utterly lacking in the majority of the adherents of the moderate school. They have more go, more life, more activity. They have obtained a hold over the popular mind ... because the moderates have obliterated themselves. I would try to win them over rather than break with them. ... Our effort should be to secure some good out of the new feverish activity—the vague longings and the natural discontent which pervade our society. We must mix the new spirit with more sobriety and sanity.'[146] But the same Mudholkar wrote to Gokhale in January 1907: '... the present is not a mere fight for titular leadership but it is a fight for the establishment of certain principles, for

the organisation of certain definite methods of work. You know as well as I do that the public professions of these gentlemen [Pal, Khaparde and Tilak] about their ideas, objects and methods are not in consonance with what they really hold and teach and preach to the initiated among their disciples. They believe in and preach the "revolutionary" methods for driving from India the foreign devils who have usurped sway there. Mr. Khaparde almost semi-publicly talks of a war and an insurrection which might be expected in a couple of years, and the year 1913 is confidently mentioned by him as one which will see the end of British rule in India. ... It would be a calamity if the dangerous doctrines of these people obtain acceptance among the simple, the guileless and the inexperienced. And it is a duty which we owe to ourselves, to our country and to our God to expose the true character, aim and object of the new school. ... they are dangerous lunatics from whose wild and fanatical teachings our people have to be protected.'[147] One can detect a similar change in Gokhale's mood between 1906 and 1907. On 9 August 1906 Gokhale wrote to N.A. Dravid: 'It will be a calamity if at the very moment we are about to reap a little fruit of our twenty-five years' labours, we were to abandon hope and wantonly wreck an institution [the Congress] whose place in the present state of things cannot be taken by another ...'[148] In December 1906, when Gokhale learnt that P.M. Mehta had told C.H. Setalvad and D.E. Wacha that he might stay away from the forthcoming Calcutta Congress because, among other things, of his annoyance over a certain passage in D. Naoroji's proposed presidential address in which he had equated *swadeshi* with boycott,[149] he at once telegraphed to Setalvad saying that Mehta's presence at the Calcutta Congress was 'indispensable' and he felt confident that the proceedings would 'end harmoniously'.[150] The same Gokhale was writing to G.M. Chitnavis on 7 August 1907—even before the venue of the forthcoming Congress had been shifted from Nagpur to Surat: 'My own reading of the situation is that it will be impossible to avoid a split this year. But if the split must come, let it come. I think that almost anything is preferable to the present situation in which wild and irresponsible men, who can think and talk daily of nothing but turning the "Feringhee" out of the country, seem to be dragging us along with them! I fear the tail has been allowed to wag the dog too long and those who think with us must put their foot down firmly this year.'[151]

B.K. Bose, a successful Bengali lawyer and Moderate leader of Nagpur, wrote to Gokhale on 28 September 1907: 'I think the Congress has now come to the parting of the ways and there should be no compromise. What is the good of crying peace when there is no peace. There can be no compromise between parties who are diametrically opposed on vital principles. Therefore I say let there be an open and clearly-defined split. It will clear the air. I even go so far as to say that the last year's compromise was a mistake. It has not satisfied the Extremists and they will want more sacrifice on the part of the Moderates as a condition of their not breaking the Congress.'[152] A fortnight before the Congress assembled at Surat, V.K. Iyer wrote to Gokhale from Madras: 'I think the situation is becoming grave. ... I am no alarmist. But I see clearly that some of us must part company with the rest or there must be heroic remedies.'[153]

What has been said above does not imply a criticism of the Moderate leaders, much less a suggestion that they were solely or even mainly responsible for the split in the Congress at Surat in 1907. It is only intended to draw attention to the fact that there was a marked hardening of the Moderate attitude towards the Extremists in 1907. This hardening was largely prompted by the behaviour of the Extremists themselves. But, whatever the cause, it was a factor of no mean significance in bringing about the split of 1907. Many Moderate leaders almost came to believe that the headache had grown so severe that it could only be got rid of by

cutting off the head. Moreover, the fact that many Moderate leaders had come to regard the split as inevitable almost helped to hasten, if not to cause, its occurrence.

A couple of months before the 1906 Congress was held at Calcutta, D.E. Wacha had learnt from H.K. Lal and 'another source' that Lajpat Rai was 'keen on taking the Congress to Lahore next year [1907]'.[154] Wacha had a very poor opinion of Lajpat Rai and most other Panjab Congressmen.[155] With the history of Panjab's hostility to the Congress leadership and the recent growth of extremism in that province, Wacha was naturally averse to the idea of a Congress session at Lahore in 1907. He wrote to Gokhale on 5 November 1906: 'That will make matters worse than even today. So long as the factional spirit lasts it will not do to take the Congress to circles where the factional spirit is most aggressive and dominating.' He suggested instead that the 1907 session should be held at 'a quiet centre' like Nagpur or Amraoti.[156] The matter was discussed briefly at the meeting of the Congress Standing Committee held at Bombay on 17-18 November 1906, but no final decision seems to have been reached.[157] From the Moderates' point of view, Nagpur was obviously preferable to Amraoti, as the latter was the stronghold of the Extremist leader of Berar, G.S. Khaparde.

At the Calcutta Congress, on 29 December, 1906, Lajpat Rai, 'acting in deference to the wishes of a majority of Punjab delegates', sent a slip to Wacha, one of the two joint general secretaries of the organization, formally inviting the next Congress to Lahore. Soon afterwards, R.N. Mudholkar, a well-known Congress leader of C.P. and Berar, went with the slip to the Panjab block and pleaded that Nagpur was keen to hold the next Congress, particularly because the last—and the only—time it had hosted it was in 1891. Lajpat Rai refused to oblige Mudholkar. The latter then appealed to another prominent Congressman from Panjab, Murlidhar, who ultimately gave in saying that if Nagpur was so keen to hold the next Congress, he would not press Panjab's claim. It was decided that the choice of the venue of the 1907 Congress should be left to the president, Dadabhai Naoroji. Mudholkar interpreted this as a waiver and informed the president that Panjab had abandoned its claim in favour of Nagpur. And so it was that in the hurry of the closing session, Naoroji announced that the 1907 session was to be held at Nagpur and called upon G.M. Chitnavis, a leading businessman of the town, formally to extend the invitation.[158]

The invitation to hold the 1907 Congress at Nagpur was a clever move on the part of the Moderate leaders to prevent its being taken to Lahore, and it was generally understood to be so. Nagpur was not only a quiet, but also a politically-backward centre, with its public life dominated by wealthy landowners, bankers, merchants, lawyers and retired government servants.[159] 'What are called public men at Nagpur were so far some Government pensioners, pettifogging lawyers and not over-educated but titled Zamindars. Those gentry necessarily belong to the Moderate school.'[160] But the Moderate leaders failed to foresee that their influence in Nagpur could be offset by the contrary pressures from Berar and Maharashtra, where Khaparde and Tilak commanded wide support. They also failed to reckon with the fact that the new Extremist wave had not left Nagpur untouched and that it had particularly affected the substantial student population of the town.

Early in 1907, while the top Moderate and Extremist leaders were busy touring the country in order to win friends and influence people, particularly the students, Congressmen at Nagpur began making preparations for holding the next Congress there. The Moderate leaders of Nagpur were anxious that 'the gentlemen directing the affairs of the Congress would be persons of experience and position' and that 'the election of the President [of the Congress] should as

far as possible rest with gentlemen of responsibility and not every man in the street who can pay Rs. 25 or any school boy who wishes to get in.'[161] With the advantage of money and an early initiative, the Moderates succeeded in securing comfortable majorities in both the provincial Congress committee and the reception committee which were formed in January-February 1907. But, as the Moderate party at Nagpur had 'at its head mainly old and dilapidated people', they originally 'allowed all persons of the adverse party whom they considered good workers to get into the Executive Committee' of the reception committee, thus giving the Extremists 'a slight majority' in that body.[162] The Nagpur Moderate leaders soon realized that they had committed a blunder since the executive committee of the reception committee was mainly responsible for making the arrangements for the forthcoming Congress. As one of them admitted: 'If the Executive Committee remains as it at present is, we shall be required to pay all the money that has to be paid to the piper but have no power to order the tune.'[163] They therefore tried—rather belatedly and in an apparently unconstitutional manner—to 'reconstruct' the executive committee in such a manner as to do away with the Extremist majority on it, or, 'to get rid once for all of all the hopelessly bad obstructionists'.[164] This attempt at 'remodelling' was naturally 'unpalatable' to the Nagpur Extremists and 'so they resolved upon the policy of terrorising our [Moderate] party'.[165] This was not the only offence which the Moderates gave to the Extremists in Nagpur. Already in March 1907 the Moderate leaders of Nagpur were laying down conditions for their co-operation in the executive committee which they knew their Extremist colleagues were unlikely to accept. On 22 March 1907, B.S. Moonje, a prominent Extremist leader of Nagpur and one of the two secretaries of the executive committee, complained to G.M. Chitnavis that since the formation of the reception committee on 23 February 1907 he had convened three meetings of its executive committee, but 'the people of the Moderate party' were 'conspicuous by their absence' and he had recently been told that their absence was 'studious and fully intentional and that it should be taken as an indication that they are not prepared to co-operate with us until, as one of the most prominent and leading member of them told me, we give them an undertaking that neither Mr. Tilak nor Lala Lajpat Rai will be elected President of the Congress and that we will not oppose the invitation to be sent to the C[hief] C[ommissioner] to open our Exhibition. Can it be called a readiness to loyally obey the rules and regulations prepared by majority in the meetings where from beginning to end the opposing party had the distinct majority at their command? We are prepared to abide by the decisions of majority and yet we are always described as obstructionists. It was by majority of these people that the present rules were passed and oftentimes our opposing voice was drowned completely in their majority; and yet it is they who are the first to come forward and say that unless the undertaking as mentioned above be given they will not work with us. ... If this be their tactical move to cow us down and frighten us to complete submission I may tell you beforehand, that we possess strength enough even to face these difficulties manfully.'[166] That Moonje was neither lying nor exaggerating is proved by a letter which B.K. Bose, a leading Moderate of Nagpur, wrote to Chitnavis on 26 March 1907 in which he said that V.R. Pandit, Bapu Rao Dada, Waman Rao and other Moderates on the executive committee of the reception committee had 'practically decided to retire from the Congress unless the extreme party agree (1) to have a moderate as President, (2) to allow you [Chitnavis] to condemn Boycott in your speech as Chairman [of the reception committee], (3) [to] drop the Boycott altogether and (4) [to] accept Government co-operation in everything. They are not likely to agree and so the matter is settled.'[167]

The detailed history of the quarrel between the Moderates and the Extremists at Nagpur, which finally led to the change of the venue of the 1907 Congress, need not be given here. But when one reads loud complaints by the Moderates in their private correspondence and in public print at the time about 'elderly, respectable and peaceably inclined' leaders of their party being 'terrorized' and 'insulted' by 'Extremist rowdies'— 'from the LL.B.s and M.A.s down to the Koshtis and Mahomedan ruffians'—one must not forget the old adage that it takes two to make a quarrel, and that the trouble was really sparked off by the Moderates' attempts to reorganize the executive committee of the reception committee, with a view to gaining a majority on it, and to lay down impossible preconditions for their co-operation with the local Extremists.

The Moderate leaders of Nagpur were inclined to throw up the sponge early in the year. They knew that their Extremist rivals were 'a body of resolute, thoroughly unscrupulous, energetic and determined body of young men' and that there was none among the Moderates who could 'even approach them in strength of character and firmness of purpose'.[168] But they were advised by their friends elsewhere to persevere. In July 1907 Chitnavis wrote to Gokhale that if the usual Congress met at Nagpur there would be 'an unprecedented row'. He therefore suggested that a resolution should be brought in the All-India Congress Committee that in view of extraordinary circumstances, only 'selected individuals from the different provinces' should meet in order to consider the best ways of conducting the Congress institution.[169] But Gokhale, after consulting P.M. Mehta, ruled out the suggestion as being 'impracticable'.[170] The Nagpur Moderates tried to retrieve the situation. The last date for the registration of members for the reception committee was 31 August 1907. They decided to put their money to some advantage and enlisted as many members to it as they could. Their object in doing so was twofold: first, they were anxious to secure a three-quarter majority for themselves on the reception committee in order to ensure the election of a Moderate to the presidency of the forthcoming Congress; and second, they wanted to use a substantial increase in the membership of the reception committee as an excuse for reorganizing its executive committee (by adding to its strength) and gaining a majority on it.

Having sufficiently augmented their numbers on the reception committee, the Nagpur Moderates convened a meeting of it on 22 September 1907 in order, among other things, to elect the president of the Congress and to reconstitute its executive committee so as to do away with the Extremist majority on it. But a determined minority of the Extremists inside the meeting hall, aided by a large and boisterous crowd of sympathizers outside, frustrated the designs of the Moderates. The meeting had to be dissolved amidst disorderly scenes and soon afterwards Chitnavis resigned as chairman of the reception committee. Efforts at reconciliation failed. The Moderate leaders of Nagpur made no secret of their feeling that they could not hold the Congress in their town, nor allow the local Extremists to do so. Even the Moderate leaders in other parts of India were inclined to regard their counterparts at Nagpur as being pusillanimous. Gokhale wanted the venue to be shifted to Madras, but Mehta decided in favour of Surat. A meeting of the Central Standing Committee was called at Mehta's residence in Bombay on 10 November 1907 and it was resolved—with a majority of nine to two—that the next Congress be held at Surat, instead of Nagpur.[171] The Nagpur Extremists—some of whom had been treated with studied discourtesy by Mehta when they went to his house on 10 November in connexion with the meeting of the Central Standing Committee—were greatly annoyed at the decision and wanted to hold their own Congress at Nagpur, but the move was scotched by Tilak himself.[172]

The considerations which possibly weighed with Mehta in choosing Surat can easily be guessed. Surat was in the Bombay presidency, which meant that he and his Bombay friends could take personal charge of the arrangements for the Congress. It also meant that, according to the established convention, Tilak could not be its president. Moreover, the 1907 Bombay provincial conference had been held at Surat on 29-30 March, so there remained some vestigial organization which could be used to arrange the Congress session at very short notice. Surat was also not plagued by factional strife such as was rampant in most other centres, including Madras. Finally, Surat was a Moderate stronghold. As the *Kesari* wrote: 'Gujarat is a private street of Mehta & Co. and according to the adage which says that every contemptible dog becomes important in his own street ... the Moderates will no doubt preponderate in the Surat Congress.'[173]

But if a split was to be avoided in 1907, the Congress should have been held as originally planned at Nagpur. This obviously involved the risk that the Extremists would have a large share in running the Congress and further radicalize its programme. It was precisely because the Moderates were not prepared to take this risk that they decided to change the venue of the Congress. If, however, the venue was to be changed with the least possible danger to the unity of the organization, it should have been changed, as Gokhale had suggested, to Madras. By taking the Congress to Surat, Mehta and his associates made sure that they would continue to dominate it, but they added yet another inflammatory ingredient to an already explosive situation, namely the mutual antipathy between the Maharashtrian and the Gujarati. This old and deep-rooted feeling exacerbated the Moderate-Extremist controversy and contributed directly and substantially to the split in the Congress at Surat in December 1907.[174]

In a series of articles published in December 1907 the *Mahratta* gave expression to the attitude of the more cool-headed and calculating among the Extremists towards the change of venue and other matters relating to the forthcoming Congress session. It said that the Extremists accepted the change of venue 'as a settled fact, though under protest' as a proof of their loyalty to the Congress constitution. 'But loyalty to a constitution is neither incompatible with nor precludes any agitation for its reform; and if there is one thing rather than another which should attract Nationalists to Surat it is this question of reform of constitution.' The *Mahratta* maintained that it would be the 'height of tactlessness at this stage' on the part of the Extremists to think in terms of holding a separate Congress of their own at Nagpur, for there were 'thousands of considerations against it both of policy and principle'. The Extremists should not 'succumb to provocations by the wire-pullers at the Moderationist headquarters'. The paper pointed out how the Extremists had upset the calculations of the Moderates in deciding to hold the 1907 session of the Congress at Nagpur, though it did not approve of the excesses that they might have committed there, particularly on 22 September 1907. 'The Nationalists at Nagpur might have committed mistakes and who does not? Was it not a mistake by Pherozeshah to refuse to show even common courtesy to some Nagpur gentlemen in the Extremist camp who went with others and were not even allowed to sit in his mansion? The Nationalists at Nagpur have evinced self-control, patience and perseverance, so that they completely changed the situation in the C.P. capital within 12 months. Why should not then the whole body of Nationalists in the country not hope, even without committing such mistakes, to similarly change the aspect of the Surat situation so far as the Congress is concerned? The voice of the Nation has said, "Blessed are the Extremists for they shall inherit the Congress". Let them therefore work with a will to see the fulfilment of that prophecy. It is a sad thought

that the Congress has been shifted to Surat where the Moderates may be in a majority, it is also cheerful that the Congress cannot be held every year at Surat. ... The Congress is a national assembly, a national institution. What right have the Moderates to an exclusive enjoyment of that good name and thing? No one would like a schism so much as the Moderates. They have everything to gain and nothing to lose. A secession by the Extremists would be as welcome to the Moderates as a millionaire father's wealth, even without the payment of death duties, would be to a lazy young lark who would have otherwise a brother to contest every inch of the way to inheritance. The Nationalists would not give up the game as recklessly. They would not surely play into the hands of the Moderates so thoughtlessly. But it is not at all a question of spiting a brother sharer or of monopolising all the good to yourself. The Nationalists must learn to afford to care for the common interest of not only the Moderates and Extremists but of all those agreeing to find common ground under the Congress pavilion. It will never be a good thing for anybody to go on cutting slices from the national platform and setting up camps each for his own safety or glorification, for then there will be really neither the safety nor the glorification. The Moderates and Extremists may differ in name, but they have really too much common ground between them to allow any separation without forfeiture of an integral organ of their vitality and an element of their strength. Is it not but pure common sense that there can never be two National Congresses? And if one of the two great parties be even doomed to be in the wrong then let the Nationalists take care that the Moderates go in for that indiscretion with their eyes open and take up that untenable position, though even if *they* do so, it must give equal cause for regret. Let it be remembered that the beauty of the rainbow abides only so long as the seven colours stick together. Each colour may and does indeed maintain its individuality, its peculiar shade. But with *their* dissolution must come that of the name and real grandeur of the thing rainbow. ... If the Nationalists are a real and growing strength in the country then surely no better place could be found for its manifestation than the Congress *pandal.* We do not say that from the point of view of mere party triumph. A party triumph is a welcome thing in itself but it would be doubly welcome if it is achieved on the Congress platform. The aim to be achieved would no doubt include the capture of the Congress but that would be a mere incidental result. And this capture would be but a means to an end; the end being more spiritual, viz., to secure the premier public body in the country to correctly express the real sentiments of the nation. It is true that the time has come for better methods of work than are to be ordinarily found in the Congress programme. But is it not a fact that the Congress programme is after all but what Congressmen themselves make it? The crux of the whole situation is to make sure that the ranks of the new party have really gained strength and when that is done the rest is all easy. ... As regards the constructive programme of work at the Surat session there is much that requires careful and earnest consideration of the new party and a conference of the new party a couple of days before the session will therefore greatly help the formulation of propositions on some of the more important subjects on which the nation will be expected to make its pronouncement.'[175]

The *Mahratta* also discussed 'the points round which this year's trial of strength will take place' at the forthcoming Congress. The first, of course, was the election of the president. By a curious coincidence, the day after the decision of the All-India Congress Committee to remove the Congress from Nagpur to Surat, Lajpat Rai had been set free, and there was a spontaneous and widespread movement among politically-conscious Indians in many parts of the country that in recognition both of his patriotic labours in the past and his more recent suffering at the

hands of an unjust government, he should be elected president of the forthcoming Congress. This naturally embarrassed the Moderate leaders for various reasons: first, some of them did not like Lajpat Rai; second, many of them felt that his election would be regarded as a victory for the Extremists; and, third, because most of them feared that it would be widely interpreted as a defiance of the government. The *Mahratta* alleged that Gokhale had recently travelled to Surat with the express object of dissuading the local reception committee from electing Lajpat Rai as president, and that in doing so he had exceeded his authority. It even maintained that the Surat reception committee was not a legally constituted body, because it had not been formed at the last provincial conference. The *Mahratta* was frank enough to admit that this was 'a technical objection', but it added that such objections became important when the good will between the two parties had been eroded. 'A compromise would be eminently desirable, but that means that something must be given if something is to be received. But the moderates at the headquarters never know what it is to make a compromise. If the removal of the Congress from Nagpur to Surat could be really regarded as a humiliation for the extremists and if the prospect of holding the Congress in the heart of Gujarat could be really looked upon as a golden guarantee for its safety, then that was precisely the moment for the moderates to offer for a compromise in regard to the other matters. But the moderates took the change of venue in the spirit of a cheap party triumph. The *Indu Prakash,* for instance, wrote: "Let us note that never was it more important to show the true character of the Congress movement, to demonstrate the real balance of party as it exists. The resolutions of this year's session should not coquet with the views of the irreconcilables as they did at Benares and Calcutta." Now no language intended to condemn the good spirit of compromise could be more provoking. A real friend of the Congress movement would be surely far from condemning the spirit of compromise shown at Benares and Calcutta because even Congress politics is an art of perpetual compromise.'[175]

According to the *Mahratta,* the second important question which ought to be discussed at the Surat Congress was that of a constitution for the Congress. 'It is comprised of many details of which the more important is the rules about the election of office-bearers of the Congress, viz. the Secretaries and members of the A.I.C.C. The controversy about the election of the President shows that rules must be made once for all for regulating the election. ... The best plan, we think, would be to have a fixed constituency of Congressmen in each province, as far as possible, the members of which should pay an annual fee for membership and vote on giving invitation to the Congress, electing the President, the members of the Subjects Committee and A.I.C.C. It is this constituency which will have to be kept well nourished and maintained in a trim condition if good Congress work may be done from time to time in the provinces. In fact the Congress has owing to recent events acquired as it were a new lease of vigorous life; and all the wisdom and statesmanship of leading Congressmen will be required to make the most of this new lease. If by provincial public work we have ascended to the Congress, let us usefully descend from the Congress to provincial activity again, keeping the Congress intact of course. There is much more to be really done during the Congress week than fighting for mere party triumph; and let us hope that we shall rise to the great occasion and leave the Congress stronger than when we met and yet with the distinct impress upon it of the new party.'[177]

In far-off England Hume and Wedderburn, who had played a leading role in establishing the Congress and in guiding its policies over the years, took a rather detached and philosophical attitude towards the growing quarrels within it. On 5 December 1907 Wedderburn wrote

privately to Gokhale: 'In India the deadly thing is apathy, and therefore I am not without hopes at present, however unpleasant some of the developments may be.'[178] He also wrote by the same mail to Tilak asking him to attend the Surat Congress and use his 'great influence' in favour of unanimity and reasonable compromise.[179] In a joint message to the Congress, forwarded to the chairman of the reception committee and dated 4 December 1907, Hume and Wedderburn observed: 'It is said that the Congress is now passing through a grave crisis; that, although its supporters are agreed as to the ends to be sought, there exist among them wide differences of opinion as to the best methods to attain those ends; and that there is a danger, for the first time, of a break in the unanimity of the Congress proceedings. As regards this forecast, we are not alarmed by differences of opinion as to methods. As a cause advances and takes more definite shape, questions of expediency and strategy must necessarily arise to divide those who are equally true to principle. Also in the army of progress there are always those who feel impelled to march faster than their comrades. Such differences are a sign of vitality, and of energy, and in this sense are to be welcomed. What we have to guard against is the danger of allowing these differences to break up the army in the day of battle, allowing opponents to crush the various sections in detail. Skirmishers are useful and necessary to go forward and draw the fire; but they must be prepared at the right moment to fall back upon their supporters, and present a united front to the enemy. Great issues depend upon the proceedings of the present Congress. Owing to the interest which recent events in India have excited, these proceedings will be watched in this country with eager scrutiny; by friends, who expect that Indian patriots will rise to the occasion; by opponents, who hope that ground will be afforded for alleging that India is unfit for self-government. What we desire to see in the Congress is unanimity, based on a wise and dignified self-restraint, such as has always distinguished its proceedings; and we feel confident that an object-lesson of such unanimity presented to the world at this important juncture will be of the highest value to India's best interests. ... In conclusion, we would say to our friends of the Congress: Be of good cheer! The pains from which India is now suffering are the pains of growth, not of decay. Have confidence in the destiny of your ancient race. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.'[180]

The change of the venue of the 1907 Congress from Nagpur to Surat so disappointed and annoyed some Extremists, particularly in Nagpur, that they seriously canvassed the idea of holding a separate Congress of their own at Nagpur. But this move was not countenanced by the more intelligent and thoughtful of the Extremist leaders, chiefly because they felt that discretion was the better part of valour and that there was no harm in waiting a little longer as they were bound to capture the Congress sooner or later. For example, a correspondent from Kolhapur wrote to the editor of the *Mahratta* in early December 1907 that he was extremely sorry to learn that the Nagpur and Madras Extremists were consulting the Bengal Extremists about holding a separate Congress at Nagpur. In his view, no greater injury could be done to the national cause than to organize a second Congress. He pleaded for unity saying: 'The present existing Congress is sure to be some day or other an Extremists' Congress... .'[181]

Among the Moderates there were some who wished to get rid of the Extremists because they believed, as H.A. Wadya wrote in a letter to the editor of the *Jam-e-Jamshed* in late September 1907, that the union of the Extremists with the Moderates in the Congress was 'the union of a diseased limb to a healthy body; and the only remedy is surgical severance if the Congress is to be saved from death by blood-poisoning'.[182] There were also some gullible

Moderates who were inclined to accept the apparently plausible advice being offered by many Anglo-Indian officials and publicists that they should repudiate the Extremists both in their own self-interest and in order to be better able to influence the British government in the interests of the country. After interviewing 'every leading official' in Simla, A. Nundy, then editor of the *Tribune,* wrote privately to Wacha on 11 October 1907: 'We have two alternatives to choose from. To continue impliedly to be working in concert with the extremists and be discredited altogether with the Government, and be placed as it were under a ban; or we can repudiate the extremists, having regard to the general welfare of the country, for in that case we can force the Government to redress our legitimate grievances. I prefer the latter alternative and have for the past few days shadowed it out in the *Tribune.* After what has occurred at Nagpur our path seems clear. It is impossible to work in harmony with the extremists. Could you not arrange for the Congress to be held elsewhere, I mean at a place where the influence of the extremists is not so pronounced, or we may take a bold line and eliminate the extremists from the reception committee, leaving them to hold their own separate Congress if they like. They will soon vanish in the air if they are left to themselves. It will not be possible for them to get together a couple of dozen men of any standing or repute.'[183]

Even the patience of the Moderate leaders like Gokhale and Wacha was being sorely tried by the behaviour of some of the Extremists and they had begun to think that a split in the Congress was 'inevitable' at Surat, but they were still anxious to preserve the unity of the organization for two main reasons: first, because they did not wish the national movement to be divided and weakened; and, second, because they feared that a split in the Congress would be taken advantage of by the reactionary British officials to deny Indians both the short-term and the long-term reforms for which they had been agitating.[184] But even Gokhale and Wacha were anxious to preserve the unity of the Congress on their own terms. They were determined to remain in firm and absolute control of the Congress organization. They were equally determined not to allow any further radicalization of the Congress programme. The determination of the Moderate leaders not to yield to the Extremists on either of these two scores was hardly conducive to the maintenance of Congress unity. It was abundantly clear by 1907 that the Congress could remain united only if the Moderates were prepared gradually to share power with the Extremists and to allow the latter to shape it nearer to their hearts' desire. The immobility—if not the alleged desire for retrogression—of the Moderates clashed against the impatience of the Extremists to produce the split in the Congress at Surat in December 1907.

The Moderate leaders countered the Extremist campaign in favour of Lajpat Rai's election as president of the 1907 Congress by first, in early November, persuading him to disavow his candidature,[185] and then getting the Surat reception committee, on 24 November, to unanimously select Dr Rash Behari Ghose as the president-designate of the forthcoming session. Gokhale had since September 1907 favoured the election of Ghose on the ground that it would 'keep on our side a considerable body of Bengali delegates, who otherwise may work and vote with the new party in the Congress'.[186] From the partisan point of view it was obviously a good choice. But, in retrospect, it may well be doubted whether it was the best calculated to promote unity in the Congress. Not only was Ghose's record of public service unimpressive, he was also intensely disliked by a section of Congressmen in Bengal. This dislike was to be an important element in the tragedy that was enacted at Surat in late December 1907. Mehta had originally suggested the name of Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur

of Madras for the presidency as an overdue gesture to south India and to the Muslim community.[187] It would probably have been better for the sake of unity in the Congress if either a popular leader like Lajpat Rai or a non-controversial figure like Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur had been chosen.

'Surat is *en fete'*,[188] cabled Reuter's correspondent to London as the time for the Congress approached. It was not unlike any other town that had the privilege of hosting the national assembly. 'The streets are daily decorated with bunting, and scrolls bearing appropriate mottoes are seen everywhere. Numerous triumphal arches have been erected. The approaches to the railway station are thronged by crowds who cheer the delegates as they arrive. The Congress will meet in a specially erected pavilion in the grounds known as the French Gardens, situated on the banks of the river Tapti. A hundred marquees have been provided for accommodating the delegates, who will, it is expected, number 1500. The scene in the vicinity of the camp is most animated. A miscellaneous stream of automobiles, bullock carts, and sight-seers is continually passing and re-passing.'[189]

Henry W. Nevinson, the famous Liberal journalist, who travelled in the same train from Calcutta to Surat with the president-elect, Dr Ghose, wrote: 'It was roses, roses all the way—almost all the way during the forty-four hours in the train from Calcutta to Surat; and along the last part of our journey every platform was crowded with eager, smiling faces straining to catch sight of the future President of the Congress, and the long-trusted leaders who accompanied him. ... He stood smiling at the carriage door, and answered with short speeches of thanks and encouragement. Or he walked the platform, and sat at station tea-tables while old men and youths hung long garlands of marigolds and jasmine round his neck, presented him with bright bouquets of flowers sparkling with "fairy rain", or sprinkled his coat and hands with Swadeshi scents from long silver bottles. ... On Christmas Day Surat was reached at last ... The crowd round the station was so tightly jammed that it was a long time before any one could leave the train. By reasoning and entreaty the youthful bands of "Volunteers" in khaki and forage caps at last cleared a space. A procession of carriages was formed and began to advance step by step through the shouting throngs of orange, crimson, and white-clad people. All the windows and tottering balconies of the beautiful but decrepit city that starves upon its past—even the galleries of Islam's crumbling minarets and the roofs of Hindu temples—were crammed with faces. Women peeped through shutters or stood shamelessly beside their children and brothers. Boys and girls thrust their heads through holes in the ruinous walls. At every few yards more garlands were offered, more bunches of flowers and sweet-smelling seeds. Thick fell the showers of rose-water sprayed from silver bottles. On every side rose the great cheer of "Bande Mataram!" From end to end the streets were hung with strings of pink and yellow paper flags, and here and there a triumphal arch uttered the universal welcome in Indian or English words. The great Pandal, or Pavilion, for the Congress, and the camp of tents pitched around it for the delegates from all India stood by the river side beyond the town itself. The distance was not much over two miles, and yet the journey took more than two hours to accomplish, so high ran the enthusiasm of joy.'[190]

'But,' Nevinson went on to say, 'behind the shouting and the triumph, one heard the quiet voice that whispers of mortality. In the grey light of Christmas morning, as we came through some obscure junction in the train, we had heard that Mr. Allen, the Collector of Dacca, had been shot on the platform at Goalundo in Eastern Bengal, and his life was despaired of. ... the news threw the same gloom and consternation over the Indian party of reform as struck the

Irish Home Rulers on the news of the Phoenix Park murders [6 May 1882]. ... this was the first political assassination, and every one knew that it would be answered by more repression, leading to further outrages and more repression again. Nothing worse could have befallen the party that still hoped for some sort of agreement in reform and conciliation with the country's far-off rulers, and the mute despondency that fell upon the leaders in the train showed the depth of their foreboding. Even more ominous were the whispers of growing and violent division that reached us at Surat. The Extremist or Nationalist party had taken a new and decisive step in pitching a separate camp for themselves in a distant quarter of the town. For the last two days Mr. Tilak had been there, organizing and addressing them. The day before they had held a full meeting of five hundred delegates, with Mr. Arabindo Ghose in the chair, and Mr. Tilak had spoken at length on the situation, especially denouncing the rumoured withdrawal of the Moderate party from the previous year's Calcutta resolutions upon Self-government, Swadeshi, Boycott, and National Education. Such a withdrawal was not to be endured. Rather than submit they would oppose the election of the President himself, even though the chair was waiting to receive him. The resolutions were nowhere to be seen. Rumour said they had been altered past recognition. The heading of a Draft Constitution for the Congress was found. There it stood written that the ultimate goal of the Congress was "the attainment by India of self-government similar to that enjoyed by the other members of the British Empire". That was Mr. Gokhale's work! How inferior to the Calcutta resolution that "the system of Government obtaining in the self-governing British Colonies should be extended to India"! "Other members of the British Empire" might mean Crown Colonies, Dependencies, anything! ... Undermining ways were at work! The Calcutta resolutions were being tampered with! the Moderates were capturing the Congress in the enemy's interest! It was not to be endured. The whole air was full of suspicion. The mere choice of Surat for the Congress after Nagpur was abandoned—how suspicious that was! ... It was known that in a Provincial Conference lately, here in Surat itself, Sir Pherozeshah had secured the exclusion of the great questions of Boycott and National Education apart from Government aid. All evidences pointed one way: the Bombay Moderates were not the men for times like these; the Bombay Moderates must go!

'So in the Nationalist camp suspicion cried aloud, and indignation grew on rumour. In the afternoon of Christmas Day, just before the President-elect arrived in insecure triumph, Lala Lajpat Rai himself went to the Nationalist camp ... He proposed a conference between the parties, five leaders a-side. The Nationalists appointed their representatives—Mr. Tilak, Mr. Arabindo Ghose, Mr. Khaparde of Nagpur and two others. On the bare hope of peace, Lajpat Rai sought Mr. Gokhale at the station as the President-elect steamed in. What a moment to arrange a conference! How could even Mr. Gokhale appoint five leaders to represent sixteen hundred delegates? For the twenty-two years of its existence the Congress had settled the form of its resolutions by a "Subjects Committee", which met for discussion in the evening after the Presidential address. Why depart from constitutional usage now? ... That night few slept. Backwards and forwards, from tent to tent and house to house, the leaders passed, discussing, consulting, deliberating, full of uncertainty and apprehension. Morning [26 December] found them still apprehensive and uncertain. In a last effort to secure Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, if not peace, Mr. Tilak, Arabindo Ghose, and Mr. Khaparde went to his house with proposals. Mr. Moti Lal Ghose, of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* went with them as peacemaker, though that remarkable man had qualifications for the task about on a level with a porcupine's. To Surendra Nath they proposed two conditions under which they would refrain from opposing the

President's election: the four Calcutta resolutions on Self-government, Swadeshi, the Boycott, and National Education must be repeated in the same form as last year, and some "graceful allusion" must be made by one of the speakers on the election of the President, "to the desire of the public to have Lajpat Rai in the Chair". ... He [Banerjea] undertook both conditions for himself, and advised the Nationalists to seek an interview with Mr. Gokhale or Mr. Tribhovandas Malvi, a Surat gentleman, Chairman of the Reception Committee, and supreme in the Congress till the President was elected. They did not attempt to see Mr. Gokhale. Mr. Malvi could not see them, because he was engaged in prayer.

'One by one the fateful hours of the morning passed away. By noon the Congress delegates and the vast audience who had paid for seats began to gather in the Pandal. The meeting was to have begun at one, but, to allow time for burning the body of a Scinde delegate who had died, it was put off till half-past two. The delay was unfortunate. In that enormous pavilion of striped canvas, full ten thousand people were already assembled. ... The delegates ... numbered perhaps sixteen hundred, of whom five hundred might be called Extremists of one kind or the other. On the platform sat some thirty to forty Indian ladies, Parsis, for the most part, but Hindus and even Mohammedans as well, significant of a deeper change than politics. The other thousands were the indistinguishable audience who had come to listen, or perhaps do more than listen. The whole interior, constructed on different levels so that all might see, rose and fell in waves of brilliant turbans, orange, crimson, gold, and white, according to the province from which they came, and in a black and solid square sat the bare-headed delegates from Bengal. Under the burning sun that pierced the roof the whole of that vast crowd remained for hours, disputing, arguing, exhorting each other in groups and districts, a dubious exercise of patience. ...

'A few minutes afterwards the Volunteers were seen lining the central passage again, and up the midst in a solid body came Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, President-elect; Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, the mitred Parsi; Mr. Wacha, the sane, unwearied master of statistics; Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, the orator of Bengal; Mr. Gokhale, whom some were tired of hearing called the Just; and other leaders of the Congress, famous and trusted for twenty years. At the sight, opposition shut its voice. The cheering rose, and rose again. ... The platform was reached. Mr. Tribhhovandas Malvi, Chairman of the Reception Committee, rose to welcome the Congress in the name of his native Surat, and there was silence. He told the history of Surat, and passed on to the history of the Congress. People do not want to hear history when they are making it. ... So the assembly waited, impatient, but in silence, save that at the word "moderation" a breath of murmur stirred. The address ended. Dewan Bahadur Ambalal S. Desai, late Chief Justice of progressive Baroda, learned in law, in banking, and commercial enterprise, rose formally to propose that Dr. Ghose, already designated President, should now take the Presidential Chair. At the name of Ghose, the deep murmur of dissent was heard again, and one shrill voice cried, "Never!" But the moment the Dewan sat down, Mr. Banerjea was seen standing in his place beside the table—Surendra Nath, the hero of a hundred platforms, grey-bearded son of thunder, youthful still in the service of the cause, by reason and temperament friend and champion of both parties alike. He was to second the proposal that Dr. Ghose should take the Chair. Hardly had his immense voice uttered ten words when, like the cracking of thunder that begins before the lightning ceases, the tumult burst, and no word more was heard. Waving their arms, their scarves, their sticks, and umbrellas, a solid mass of delegates and spectators on the right of the Chair sprang to their feet and shouted without a moment's pause. Over their heads was the

label, "Central Provinces"—Central Provinces where Nagpur stands and the Congress was to have been. "Remember Nagpur!" they cried; "Remember Midnapur!" where, during the Bengal Provincial Conference a week or two before [*sic*], Surendra Nath had attempted to keep the peace against the Extremists, and had actually sat on the same platform with a District Superintendent of Police! White turbans from Madras joined them. The whole ten thousand were on their feet, shouting for order, shouting for tumult. Mr. Malvi, still half in the Chair, rang his brass Benares bell, and rang in vain. Surendra Nath sprang upon the very table itself. Even a voice like his was not a whisper in the din. Again and again he shouted, unheard as silence. He sat down, and for a moment the storm was lulled. The voices of the leaders were audible, consulting in agitated tones—Dr. Ghose shrill, impatient, and perturbed with anger; Mr. Gokhale distressed, anxious, harassed with vain negotiation and sleepless nights. Already one caught the word "suspension". "If they will not hear Surendra Nath, whom will they hear?" said one. "It is an insult to the Congress," said another. "An insult to Bengal!" cried a third. Again Surendra Nath sprang on the table, and again the assembly roared with clamour. Again the Chairman rang his Benares bell, and rang in vain. In an inaudible voice like a sob he declared the sitting suspended. The platform rose, Surendra Nath descended, the Indian ladies ... filed out through a door at the back, and the leaders of the Congress movement disappeared into tents prepared for them.

'After twenty-two years of steady and regular procedure the Congress had broken up in less than an hour. To the excited groups into which the great assembly split it seemed incredible. As when a growing child overturns the family routine and is astonished to find its parents distraught and weeping, so the Extremists stood a little amazed and dumbfounded at what they had done. Wild defence was met by wild denunciation, but no violence followed. It was still a polite and peaceful people, anxious to leave conciliation open. I conversed with Mr. Kelkar of Poona, editor of the *Mahratta,* as Mr. Tilak's lieutenant. The outbreak, he said, was accidental and unexpected. They had determined to oppose Dr. Ghose's election, but not by tumult; they would not even have opposed it had not the Moderate offer of compromise come too late. I visited the Nationalist camp, far across the town, and found Mr. Tilak himself, just returned from his dubious triumph, sitting naked in his cloth. He gave me the same assurance. The whole thing had been a mistake; it had all happened because the undertaking to renew the Calcutta resolutions had reached him too late—not till the Chairman had begun his speech. The resolutions had then been handed to him by Mr. Gokhale, and he had admitted he would himself have been satisfied if certain changes in their wording had been removed and the original form restored. But by that time it was too late to reassure his followers, or to re-establish his authority for peace.

'It is hard to say how far this difficulty about the Calcutta resolutions was vital, or how far a sincere desire for peace might have explained it away. The mere delay in supplying them to Mr. Tilak was accidental—the fault of a Surat printer. Mr. Gokhale has said so, and his word is above suspicion. But he admits that "slight verbal alterations had been made in one or two of them to remove ambiguity", and it was left, as usual, for the Subjects Committee to decide in what form they should finally be submitted to the Congress. Unhappily, after the events of the day, there was no chance or thought of a Subjects Committee meeting, and the disputed alterations remained unsettled. Some were obviously unimportant, unless a quarrel was desired on any straw. The change from "the system of government obtaining in the self-governing Colonies" to "the self-government enjoyed by the other members of the British Empire" in a

draft constitution implied no change of meaning, but, hearing of the criticism, Mr. Gokhale had himself inserted the word "self-governing" before "members of the British Empire". In the Swadeshi resolution, the Calcutta version had promised "to stimulate the production of indigenous articles by giving them preference over imported commodities even at some sacrifice"; in the new draft this sentence appeared as "to stimulate the consumption of indigenous articles by giving them preference where possible over imported commodities". Here the omission of the words "even at some sacrifice" was due to the inaccuracy of the newspaper copy, from which the resolution was taken. In the Calcutta resolution about National Education the clause proposing "to organize a system of education—literary, scientific, and technical—suited to the requirements of the country on national lines and under national control" had been altered in the new draft to a proposal "to organize an independent system of education—literary, scientific, and technical—suited to the requirements of the country". Mr. Gokhale defended the alteration on the ground that it avoided the triple repetition of the word "national", was more restrained in form, and "more in accord with what was being actually attempted in different parts of India". In the changes so far there was nothing to split a party determined to preserve its unity.

'The difference in the remaining resolution was vital. It went to the very root of the difference between the parties, and for the sake of it alone the proposed changes remain worthy of notice. In the original Calcutta resolution the Congress was "of opinion that the Boycott Movement inaugurated by Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of that province was and is legitimate". In the new form proposed for discussion in the Subjects Committee the wording ran, "This Congress is of opinion that the Boycott of foreign goods resorted to in Bengal by way of protest against the Partition of that province was and is legitimate." All the difference between Moderates and Extremists—just the one point which made genuine conciliation impossible—lay implied in that small difference of wording. "Boycott of foreign goods" was plain; it was a necessary part of Swadeshi, whether used as a political protest or as an encouragement to Indian industries. But "Boycott Movement" might mean the rejection of almost anything—the rejection of foreign goods; of foreign justice, foreign appointments, foreign education, foreign authority, taxation, Government itself. Already it had been so interpreted, both at the Calcutta Congress and frequently throughout the year. To yield on this point would be to hand over the Congress to Extremists for ever, to abandon the first principles of the Congress, which had been to work out the salvation of India in association with the British rulers, and endeavour, in spite of Anglo-Indian mockery and hatred, to invoke the sense of justice which must somewhere surely lie in the heart of so great and free a people as the English. If these first principles were now to be abandoned, if the Congress was to be pledged to call upon India to go her own way, regardless of the English people and the English Government, the Congress as it had hitherto existed might as well give up the pretence of existence and bequeath its effects to a new and different force. Here was no half-way house, no common ground for compromise. The alteration in the wording was vital.

'On this difference at the root negotiation failed. The Boycott resolution was perhaps not even mentioned, but at the back of men's minds the difference lay. Through the evening and night negotiations continued. The Nationalists held another conference in their camp. Unless the Calcutta resolutions were replaced in the original form, they were instructed to oppose the election of Dr. Ghose, but to allow all speakers a fair hearing and create no tumult. Envoys passed between the camps; could not a joint committee of the parties meet for discussion?

Could not Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Tilak meet? Could not Surendra Nath act as conciliator? Could not Dr. Rutherford, Member of the Mother of Parliaments, be asked for the advice of historic experience? Backwards and forwards the negotiation went, and during that night also few slept.

'The morning of December 27th again found them at variance, still uncertain, their mood more fretted by sleeplessness and anxiety. But a general anticipation of peace prevailed, because all foresaw what the enemies of reform would say if the Congress collapsed. By noon the Pandal was again full to overflowing. At one o'clock the Presidential procession entered. Again Dr. Rash Behari Ghose bore with him the printed copy of his Presidential address, which ought to have been delivered the afternoon before, and had, unhappily, appeared that morning in some of the Calcutta papers, with an attack upon the Extremists still unaltered. At his side, as before, came the familiar Congress leaders, and amid stormy applause that breathed defiance to interruption, they took their seats behind the green table that stretches the whole length of the high-raised platform, before which there was no railing, but only, as it were, an escarpment for defence.

'In the front row of the delegates, not in the place reserved for him on the platform, Mr. Tilak was seated. As the procession entered he sent a note to the Chairman by one of the boy Volunteers to say he wished to speak on the election of the President after the seconder had spoken. According to his own account, he added, "I wish to move an adjournment with a constructive proposal", apparently referring to another special conference of delegates from both sides. According to the Chairman and others who claimed to have seen the note, it proposed "an amendment for the adjournment of the Congress". It was a difference much argued afterwards, but the note itself had disappeared into chaos and could no more be recovered than Sibyl's leaves that flitted round her cave.

'In deliberate and expectant silence the proceedings began. Mr. Malvi called upon Mr. Banerjea to take up his speech, seconding the appointment of Dr. Ghose as President. Speaking with a chastened exuberance, as a hero rebuked by fate, Surendra Nath appealed to the past achievements of the Congress, appealed to the necessity of union for strength, and sat down amid silence, amid applause. Mr. Motilal Nehru, wealthy barrister of Allahabad, circumspect and respected, Moderate by nature in everything but generosity, said a few sentences. Every one went delicately, moving on a crust of ashes. In inaudible words Mr. Malvi proposed that Dr. Ghose should take the Chair as President, and amid various shouting he declared the motion carried. Heavy with years and knowledge, Dr. Ghose transferred himself to the seat, and rose at once to deliver that thoughtfully prepared address. "Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen," he began, "my first duty is to tender you my thanks for the signal honour you have done me."

'Beyond his first duty he never went. As when lightning flashes in air surcharged with storm, Mr. Tilak was seen standing straight in front of the Presidential Chair itself, expostulating, protesting, all in that calm, decisive voice of his, the voice of a man indifferent to fate. He had given notice of an amendment, he was there to move it, and there he would remain. "You cannot move an adjournment of the Congress", cried Mr. Malvi; "I declare you out of order." "I wish to move an amendment to the election of President, and you are not in the Chair", Mr. Tilak replied. "I declare you out of order!" cried Dr. Ghose. "You have not been elected", answered Mr. Tilak: "I appeal, to the delegates."

'Uproar drowned the rest. With folded arms Mr. Tilak faced the audience. On either side of him young Moderates sprang to their feet, wildly gesticulating vengeance. Shaking their fists and yelling to the air, they clamoured to hurl him down the steep of the platform. Behind him,

Dr. Ghose mounted the table, and, ringing an unheard bell, harangued the storm in shrill, agitated, unintelligible denunciations. Restraining the rage of Moderates, ingeminating peace if ever man ingeminated, Mr. Gokhale, sweet-natured even in extremes, stood beside his old opponent, flinging out both arms to protect him from the threatened onset. But Mr. Tilak asked for no protection. He stood there with folded arms, defiant, calling on violence to do its worst, calling on violence to move him, for he would move for nothing else in hell or heaven. In front, the white-clad audience roared like a tumultuous sea.

'Suddenly something flew through the air—a shoe!—a Mahratta shoe!—reddish leather, pointed toe, sole studded with lead. It struck Surendra Nath Banerjea on the cheek; it cannoned off upon Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. It flew, it fell, and, as at a given signal, white waves of turbaned men surged up the escarpment of the platform, brandishing long sticks, they came, striking at any head that looked to them Moderate, and in another moment, between brown legs standing upon the green-baize table, I caught glimpses of the Indian National Congress dissolving in chaos. Like Goethe at the battle of Valmy, I could have said, "Today marks the beginning of a new era, and you can say that you were present at it."

'The Indian ladies vanished. The platform leaders withdrew rapidly through a door at the back of the Pandal. Mr. Tilak was borne off by his followers. But in the vast pavilion itself a combat raged at large. Chairs, useless now except as missiles, flew through the air like shells discharged at a venture; long sticks clashed and shivered; blood flowed from broken heads. Group rushed upon group, delegate upon delegate. Breathing slaughter, they glared for victims. It was hard to tell friend from foe. Ten thousand men, all crowded together among ten thousand chairs, no uniform, no distinction, nothing to mark off Extremist from Moderate except the facial expression of a temperament—it was a confused and difficult conflict to maintain. Who would wish to fall to the bludgeon of a political friend? Nor was a certain chivalry or politeness wanting. Standing in the midst on a chair from which I could command the scene, I watched two champions, beaked vultures from the North, belabouring each other with murderous intent. By an adroit stroke one brought his stick down on the other's skull, and knocked his turban off. Instantly a truce was granted till the many yards of long white turban had been rapidly rolled tight again, and then with fresh fury the contest was renewed.

'So with varied incident the combat swayed and raged and crackled. Suddenly the police appeared—no mistaking them in their short blue uniforms and the little clubs that made no political distinctions. Only about thirty entered, but thirty men who know what they want are to ten thousand who are not quite sure like a dog to sheep. ... Bit by bit the tumult was driven out by the doors into the open. Within an hour the vast Pandal, strewn with broken chairs, sticks, and rags of raiment, stood empty as a banquet-hall deserted.

'Even that night negotiations were again renewed But suspicion had now gone too deep, and, as in an instinctive quarrel, each attempt at conciliation revealed a new distrust. Next day (December 28th) opened with savage rumours of bloodshed, but two hundred police now guarded the wreck of the Pandal, and there, in anxious and regretful security, a convention of nine hundred Moderates met. They had signed an agreement to preserve order, to promote reform by constitutional means, and to aim at self-government similar to the self-government existing in other parts of the Empire. Dr. Ghose was in the Chair, some of the prominent leaders spoke, and a committee was appointed to watch events. ... In the afternoon the Extremists also held a convention, and also appointed a committee to watch events. In the large courtyard of a private house they met in silent crowds. Grave and silent—I think without saying

a single word—Mr. Arabindo Ghose took the Chair, and sat unmoved, with far-off eyes, as one who gazes at futurity. In clear, short sentences, without eloquence or passion, Mr. Tilak spoke till the stars shone out and some one kindled a lantern at his side. He reviewed the situation, accused the "Bombay Moderates" of seeking favour with the Government and rejecting the Nationalist offers of compromise. He had no wish to destroy the Congress, for its prestige was useful; but a new spirit had entered Indian affairs, and unless the Congress was permeated with the new spirit it had better die—it was dead already. By the new spirit he meant self-confidence and self-assertion, contrasted with the old methods of petitions for rights, appeals for justice, and other forms of mendicancy which the British Government answered with elusive promises, and the Anglo-Indians with scorn.

'So, on that note of deep and perhaps irreconcilable divergence, the twenty-third Indian National Congress ended. ... The work of the old Congress as it had existed for all those years was rolled up and done. Re-union of Moderate and Extremist in some form might still be possible; for a militant party, a nationalist party, an Opposition is never long divided, and oppression is a fine reconciler. But breach or no breach, all felt the Congress would never be the same again. In the twinkling of a shoe it had been changed, and a new spirit, a different and difficult spirit, had indeed arisen in the country.'[191]

Nevinson's superb description of the split at Surat can hardly be improved upon and for that reason it has been reproduced at such length. All that remains to be done is to add to his account stray bits of information which have since become available.

Both parties tried to muster strong at Surat by 'manufacturing delegates'[192] who would otherwise not have gone there. The Moderates had the advantage of locale and money over the Extremists in this regard. In late November 1907 Mudholkar warned Gokhale and Wacha that 'Khaparde, Moonje & Co.' were planning to utilize the funds collected at Nagpur to take 'hundreds' of 'rowdy delegates' to the Congress from C.P. and Berar and that similar contingents would be sent from the Deccan, Bombay, Madras, and Bengal. He suggested that the Surat leaders be instructed that 'they should secure the adhesion of not less than a thousand delegates from Gujerat of the right stuff and mettle. They must secure the support of all the staid elements of the population and show such a united and bold front to the mischief-makers as would terrify them.'[193]

Again, on 17 December 1907, Mudholkar wrote to Gokhale that though he would try to bring as many of his friends as possible with him to Surat, there were 'practical difficulties'. 'We have either listlessness and apathy or cowardice and want of public spirit to contend against. The number of wholehearted Moderates who have faith in their principles and are prepared to work zealously for them is going down everyday. We have either extremism or indifference among the new generation of educated Indians.' He therefore insisted that the Moderate leaders should try to get the largest number of recruits from Bombay and Gujarat. 'Unless Surat and other cities of Gujerat send 1000 moderates [as delegates to the 1907 Congress] and Bombay sends another 300 or 400 we have a great danger before us.' Mudholkar also suggested that they should try to secure 'a strong contingent of Mahomedans who would take a firm stand against the Extremist demands and ... put another spoke in the wheel of the irreconcilables'. Mudholkar believed that the volunteers and visitors were more to be feared than the delegates. If the volunteers did not yield to 'the wishes and seductions of Khaparde,

Tilak and Co.', law and order at the Congress could easily be maintained. As regards the visitors, he recommended that (i) all tickets should be made non-transferable; (ii) all tickets of Rs 2 should be purchased by the Moderates by 22 December, 'before the Extremist rowdies go to Surat'; (iii) visitors should be told in advance that they would be turned out if they tried to participate in the Congress proceedings. Mudholkar also advised Gokhale to prevail upon Lajpat Rai to make a public announcement that his name should not be put in competition with Rashbehari Ghose's. 'Such a declaration will have the effect of creating a division.' Even the calculating Mudholkar was, however, careful to conclude on a cautious note: 'But we are living in revolutionary times. Who can say what will happen tomorrow.'[194]

In early December 1907, C.Y. Chintamani, then busy assisting the Surat reception committee and still unsure of the relative strength of the two parties, privately uttered this note of warning and advice: 'If the old party is not to sign its own death-warrant, I am humbly of opinion that it is absolutely necessary for it to give up its present attitude of supineness, feebleness and indecision, and that it must pull together. *The leaders must confer among themselves before the Congress and resolve upon defining the creed of the Congress and restricting admission to those who will subscribe to it* and upon a number of other things concerning the future of the Congress. ... If the Congress survives the next session in its present shape, which is doubtful to my mind, I think the next year's session will have to be held in Madras.'[195]

Tilak was later accused by Gokhale of setting up 'a separate camp of his own followers' and of creating 'a pledge-bound party to vote with him like a machine' at Surat.[196] This seems to be a rather unfair accusation, especially in view of the elaborate planning and preparation which Gokhale and his Moderate associates made in order to be able to have the upper hand at the Surat Congress and of which some indication has been given above. Moreover, what Tilak tried to do at Surat was not entirely an 'innovation'. Both at Banaras (1905) and at Calcutta (1906) the Extremists had functioned as a distinct group within the Congress. They had also tended to live together, though *in* the Congress camp. If at Surat in 1907 the Extremists set up a separate camp of their own in a different quarter of the town—away from the main Congress camp—part of the blame for this novel development must attach to the Moderates themselves. They knew that the Extremists were competing with them to muster strong at Surat. They also knew that the financial resources of the Extremists were limited and that most of their supporters belonged to the relatively less well-off classes—those whom the Moderates contemptuously described as 'fitters, barbers and oilmen'.[197] In order, therefore, to keep down the number of Extremist delegates and visitors to the Surat Congress, the Moderate-dominated reception committee deliberately fixed the charges for messing and the fees for delegates and visitors on the high side.[198] This naturally prompted the Extremists to make their own separate and cheaper arrangements for board and stay.

Probably the most interesting and vivid description of the two rival groups at the Surat Congress of 1907 was given by a writer (A. Nundy?) in the *Tribune* of 10 and 12 January 1908. The writer pointed out how at earlier Congresses there used to be only one reception committee and one camp. At Surat the Extremists set up an opposition camp in a different and remote quarter of the town. There they lived together in discomfort and inconvenience. But they were apparently eager to disclose to the world the fact that their views were so different that they could not even keep up the pretence of associating with the Moderates. The official reception committee had made satisfactory arrangements for the board and lodging of about a thousand

delegates and taken care to look after their creature comforts. There was an attractive dining hall. Several motor cars were placed at the disposal of the delegates. The Extremist camp was 'an object-lesson in simplicity'. The arrangements for board and lodging were 'of a somewhat primitive kind'. It was a rival camp but there was no rivalry in outward display, ostentation or administering to creature comforts; it 'consisted rather in setting up certain new ideas as to the aims and objects of the Congress, the methods on which it was to be worked and as to the personality of those who were to direct its counsels'. The Extremists had hired a number of dwelling houses not far from the Surat railway station in a somewhat poor quarter of the town, where 400 Extremist delegates and visitors lived. There was no organized reception committee. A number of men banded together to perform the labour of love. Host and guest joined for common welfare. Every delegate to the Congress was required to pay a fee of Rs 20. Besides, he had to pay for his meals. In the official camp the charges for meals per head were Rs 5 a day for English style or Rs 10 in all for Indian style. The Extremists had no share in the delegate fee. They reduced the charges for meals from Rs 10 to Rs 5. They had no tables or chairs. Unlike the Moderates, they had no separate kitchens and dining halls for the orthodox and the unorthodox. There was only one dining hall where 'people from various parts of India, and of diverse castes and creeds were found fraternising'. They had hired a house with a large courtyard to meet and confer. Persons staying in the Extremist camp looked happier and more cheerful than those staying in the official Moderate camp. According to the writer in the *Tribune,* there were two main reasons for this. First, a good many people who attended the Congress were mere sight-seers who had no serious interest in politics. Of this class of persons the Extremist camp was entirely free. The Extremists might be wrong-headed, but they were serious-minded. They were 'men who were more in earnest in their ideas and as such were indifferent to the creature comforts of this world'. Secondly, in the Extremist camp there 'was no difference made between one person and another. All fared alike. If they slept on the floor so did Tilak, Khaparde and the others. All ate the same food and secured the same amount of attention. There was a feeling of *camaraderie,* as well as a sentiment of common interest. ... this feature was conspicuous by its absence in the Moderate camp and gave rise to a considerable amount of grumbling and discontent.'[199]

The writer in the *Tribune* went on to point out how in the Moderate camp at Surat, delegates were not in touch with the officers of the reception committee and much less so with the Congress executive. The bulk of the delegates never caught sight of either the chairman or the many secretaries of the reception committee. The original intention of the Congress was to bring all classes of men together, but gradually 'a Congress aristocracy' had emerged, and anyone who considered himself to be a Congress notable took up his quarters in a separate residence outside the Congress camp. The cost of maintaining these notables was enormous. They made heavy demands on the time and funds of the reception committee. 'But there is', added the writer in the *Tribune,* 'a much greater evil than all this which is entailed in separate residences being provided for those who consider themselves distinguished in the annals of the Congress. These are entirely out of touch with the average delegate who for all the good he does by attending the Congress might as well have remained at home. The number of those who can get elected to the Subjects Committee is limited, and the only means the ordinary delegate has of making his voice heard is through his leaders. But if he finds that his leaders are living in Olympian heights and are averse to rubbing shoulders with common mortals and should therefore give way to grumbling and discontent should afford no surprise. ... the

Extremists stuck to Mr. Tilak and the other leaders notwithstanding the blunders, and worse than blunders committed by them. It was simply that he had made common cause with them in everything. If the Moderate leaders are wise they will take a leaf from Mr. Tilak's book and keep more in touch with their followers.'[200]

Long before the Congress assembled at Surat it was clear to many knowledgeable persons that there was going to be a trial of strength between the Moderates and the Extremists at the session and that the possibility of disorder and division could not be ruled out. Hopes and fears in this regard were openly expressed in the press. A few examples will suffice. The *Kesari* wrote on 3 December 1907: 'Though Sir Pherozeshah Mehta has triumphed in this case [of getting Ghose elected president], his influence is on the wane and we have firm hopes that the Extremist party will carry the day in the end.'[201] Again, on 10 December 1907, the same paper said: 'If Lala Lajpat Rai is not given the honour, a tough fight is sure to ensue over the election of the President.'[202] On 5 December 1907 the *Dnyan Prakash* exhorted 'the Moderates to muster strong at the Congress and defeat Mr. Tilak's plan of capturing it'.[203] The *Indian People* observed on 15 December 1907: 'Every attempt to conciliate the new party and to co-operate with it has failed and the rupture is now complete.'[204] The *Hindu Punch,* 18 December 1907, remarked that the Extremists were 'making a mess of the Congress' and 'deserve[d] to be kicked'.[205] The *Bhala* wrote on 21 December 1907 that the Extremists should 'sever connection with the Moderates and hold a separate Congress at Surat'.[206] The *Indian Social Reformer* warned on 22 December 1907: '... the arm of the moderate party, unassisted by the law, is strong enough to put down disturbances. Extremism which strives to advance through brute force will bring about its own fall.'[207]

A great deal—including the behaviour of rival groups—was to depend on the relative strength of the two parties at Surat, and this was not clear until the Congress actually assembled on the afternoon of 26 December 1907. On 24 December Khaparde had noted in his diary: 'We number over 600.'[208] But he had no idea of the number of the Moderate delegates who were to attend. Ever since his arrival in Surat on 17 December he had been trying to rally local popular support. On 20 December M. Nanabhai, one of the secretaries of the Surat reception committee, wrote to Gokhale: 'Mr. Khaparde is daily preaching here. The mob only attend these lectures. No people of higher social rank go there.'[209] On 23 December Tilak had addressed a public gathering of at least seven thousand people.[210] But popular support, however exhilarating, was no indication of actual strength at a Congress session, as the Extremists had known for some time. Moreover, about a week before the Congress was to open, the Moderates had stolen another march over the Extremists. Obviously under the influence of Gokhale, Lajpat Rai had issued a statement, which had been widely publicized, saying that he had no desire to contest the presidency and threatening to stay away from the Congress altogether if his friends did not cease to press for his election. 'I shall be the last person to allow myself to be made the reason or occasion of any split in the national camp', he had added.[211] Lajpat Rai's neutrality and later virtual defection to the Moderate camp not only caused great embarrassment to the Extremists, it also robbed them of the support of scores of delegates to the Surat Congress, not all of them belonging to Panjab, for he was by all accounts the most popular Congress leader in India at the time. When, therefore, the much-advertised Nationalist Conference met at Gheekantawadi, Surat, on 24 December 1907, it was attended by no more than 600 delegates, most of whom were Maharashtrians.[212] Everyone who attended the Conference paid rupee one and signed a simple declaration of being 'a Nationalist'.[213] Aurobindo Ghose was elected president and N. C. Kelkar became secretary.

Adequate and precise information about what was actually discussed and decided at the Nationalist Conference is not available. It would, however, appear that the shrewder among the Extremist leaders, notably Tilak, had begun to realize that they would not have a majority in the Congress session and that their strategy should be to stay in the Congress and exert maximum pressure on it to their advantage. As Tilak put it in his speech at the Conference: 'The object of the Nationalist Conference, which was part and parcel of the National Congress, was not to secede from the Congress, but to make the members of the Congress Nationalists. ... The thing was to force Nationalist views on the Congress, or at any rate to see that it did not slide back.'[214]

But the growing realization that the Extremists were in a minority among the delegates who came to attend the Congress at Surat had a different effect on the hawks on both sides. Among the Moderate hawks it reinforced their determination to make no further concessions to the Extremists towards the radicalization of Congress methods and objectives, to correct 'the mistakes' committed at Calcutta and Banaras, and to drive out of the Congress those Extremists who preached all-round boycott and absolute independence by imposing on the organization a definitely constitutional and loyalist creed. The same realization made the Extremist hawks more impatient and wilful, and instead of being driven out of the Congress they decided to wreck it.

The Nationalist Conference, on 24 December, apparently decided to oppose the election of Ghose as president of the Congress, to try to gain a fair representation for the Extremists on the subjects committee, to insist on the retention of the four Calcutta resolutions in their original form, and to make known their differences with the Moderates in the open session of the Congress.

There was nothing in the reputation, character and the manner of his election, to make Ghose a favourite of the Extremists. His undelivered presidential address of 1907 contained a long and severe indictment of them. That he would have been glad to see the Extremists out of the Congress is evident from the following passage in that address: 'We must not forget that the National Congress is definitely committed only to constitutional methods of agitation to which it is fast moored, and if the new party does not approve of such methods and cannot work harmoniously with the old, everybody must admit it has no place within the pale of the Congress. Secession, therefore, is the only course open to it.'[215] There can be little doubt that with most Extremist leaders the opposition to Ghose's election as president was no more than a symbolic gesture of protest or a bargaining-counter.

The dissatisfaction of the Extremists with the manner in which the Moderate managers of the Congress packed the subjects committee with their own men was not new.[216] The Nationalist Conference authorized its secretary, Kelkar, to write to the chairman of the Surat reception committee about the composition of the subjects committee. The 1906 Congress at Calcutta had laid down clear provincial proportions for this all-important body but not the exact method of electing its members. Kelkar stated that, unlike in previous years, there were likely to be fiercely contested elections for the subjects committee and so far as he knew there were no procedures for holding them. He expressed the hope that the reception committee had given its thought to this matter and would propose some *modus operandi,* but he insisted that all parties should agree on the procedure beforehand 'so that there should be no confusion and no occasion for disagreement of views or deadlock at the eleventh hour'.[217] Surely, there was nothing in this proposal to obstruct or wreck the Congress. In fact, if any positive proof were

wanted of the desire of a large number of Extremist delegates present at Surat to participate actively in the proceedings of the Congress, here was one.

The chairman of the reception committee, T.N. Malvi, probably never cared to reply to Kelkar's letter. But, with their better and longer experience of the politics of manipulation both within the Congress and outside, the Moderate leaders were already busy trying to secure an overwhelming majority for themselves on the subjects committee. For example, they had circulated among the Bombay delegates a printed form which read as follows:

'23 Indian National Congress

Election of members of Subjects Committee for Bombay Presidency (25 to be elected).

N.B. Names of gentlemen who are *ex-officio* members of Subjects Committee are given below.

I, the undersigned, record my vote in favour of these gentlemen being elected Members of the Subjects Committee for the Bombay Presidency:—

H.S. Dikshit, D.A. Khare, M.A. Jinnah, N.M. Samarth, Jehangir Petit, D.G. Padhye, Rustom K.R. Kama, G.K. Gadgil, Jivanlal Varajrai Desai, G.A. Patil, Ramanbhai Mahipatram, Gokaldas K. Parekh, Ambashankar Uttamram Malji, Dr. Benjamin, Chimanlal Sitalwad, Khandubhai Desai, Markand N. Mehta, Motabhai Desai, B.G. Tilak, R.P. Karandikar, V.R. Natu, C.V. Vaidya, S.R. Gokhale, Harichandrani Bharwani, Mathuradas Javeri.

Surat: 26.12.1907 Sig. Voter

Ex-officio Members of the Subjects Committee:- P.M. Mehta, Diwan Bahadur Ambalal Sakerlal, G.K. Gokhale, D.E. Wacha, Chairman of Surat Congress Reception Committee, Secretaries of Surat Congress.'[218]

The list, although it included Tilak and his friends R.P. Karandikar, V.R. Natu and C.V. Vaidya, consisted overwhelmingly of men from Gujarat and Bombay city who were known Moderates.

The circulation of a printed form like this must have warned the Extremists that their adversaries would manage to have a majority not only in the open session but also in the subjects committee of the Congress. Nobody likes being in a minority, especially in a declared trial of strength. It is not improbable that the realization that they were likely to be in a minority—both in the open session and in the subjects committee—suggested to the Extremists the idea that their only chance of having their own way at the meeting lay in adopting a policy of obstruction. The same realization might have even prompted the more daring or desperate among the Extremists to try to destroy what they had failed to dominate. Aurobindo's disclosure many years later 'that it was I (without consulting Tilak) who gave the order that led to the breaking of the Congress' at Surat,[219] acquires significance in this context.

It is almost impossible at this distance in time to determine with any degree of certainty how much truth there was in the Extremists' accusation that the 'Bombay Moderates' contemplated going back on the four Calcutta resolutions, or how genuine were their fears on this score. Many leading Moderate politicians and publicists made no secret of their dislike of the four Calcutta resolutions, particularly the one relating to boycott. Some of them even desired—and openly advocated—a rectification of the 'mistake' committed at Calcutta in 1906. All this would naturally have aroused Extremist suspicions of Moderate designs. These suspicions were reinforced by the omission of *swaraj,* boycott, and national education from the list of 'the probable subjects for discussion at the ensuing Congress at Surat'[220] issued in mid-December 1907 by the reception committee. Immediately the Extremists raised the cry that the

Moderates were planning to drop or distort the four Calcutta resolutions. In the light of these facts, it can only be regretted that Gokhale delayed attending to the draft resolutions—with the result that their copies were not available to the Congress delegates until the afternoon of 26 December 1907—and that he decided to make even 'slight alterations' in the four Calcutta resolutions.[221]

Another interesting feature of the situation at Surat deserves to be emphasized. While the Moderate leaders had their following firmly under control, their Extremist counterparts were not in the same happy situation. As Lajpat Rai later testified: 'Mr. Tilak's chief fault ... [at Surat] was that, instead of leading his party, he allowed himself to be led by some of its wild spirits. Twice on my request, at Surat, he agreed to waive his opposition to the election of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose and leave the matter of the four Calcutta Resolutions to the Subjects Committee, but the moment I left him he found himself helpless before the volume of opinion that surrounded him.'[222]

Writing more than eighteen months after the event Lajpat Rai, in his desire to be fair and impartial to both sides and anxious to promote reunion, blamed the leaders of both parties for the split at Surat: 'But while this is true, that Mr. Tilak's party was directly responsible for the scenes, can any one deny that the leaders of the other side were also *anxious* to bring about the split, and that had they been in a different mood, their resourcefulness could have avoided it?'[223]

Writing almost eighty-seven years after the Surat split one is inclined to make a more philosophical generalization. Perhaps things, not men, were in the saddle; events proved to be too powerful for any of the men involved. A situation of what Professor Herbert Butterfield has called 'Hobbesian fear' had been created, in which each side, being desperately unsure about the intentions of the other and beset by the devils of fear and suspicion, was inclined to be a little more wilful or self-righteous than it ordinarily was.[224] Maybe, the conflict between the Moderates and the Extremists was irrepressible and the split at Surat inevitable. Even before the schism had finally taken place, a commentator in the London *Daily Telegraph* of 27 December 1907, waiting 'for the actual results of the battle of the Congresswallahs at Surat' wrote with that prescience which a knowledge of history is supposed to give: 'Moderates and Extremists represent separate programmes as well as profound differences in temperament and tactics. The younger agitators are for a frontal assault, waged by every method of veiled rebellion, against the enemy, while the older leaders are for the more subtle methods of political sapping and mining. Those behind cry "Forward!" and those before cry "Back!" Both sections have loudly professed their desire for union. But we know what happens in these familiar situations. An open split must take place, or under forms of compromise one or the other must yield. We are perfectly familiar with this process in connection with all national movements in the Europe of the last two generations. The men by whom these struggles were started lived to be regarded as tame or shrinking spirits, and another generation—like the young Czechs, or the young Irelanders, or the revivified party of Kossuthism in Hungary during the last few years—came forward with more advanced ideals and a more sensational plan of campaign. The Extremists have almost invariably carried matters against the Moderates for a time, but by no means with as much success in the sequel. ... the "Moderate", however superior in abstract wisdom, is nearly always inferior in energy, definiteness of aim, and power of combative action by comparison with the Extremist; and it would not be in the least surprising, if even east of Suez the Jacobins conquered the Girondists in the familiar historic method without reflecting upon the fate that has usually befallen the fanatical victors.'[225]

6

The Twilight of the Moderates

If historieal experienee were any guide, the Extremists should have eaptured the Congress after its split at Surat. This is what the eommentator in the *Daily Telegraph,* who was quoted at the end of the last chapter, had predieted, and this is what was indieated by the apparently large influence whieh the Extremists had in the eountry at the time. In the event, however, the Moderates remained in eontrol of the organization after the split. Of eourse, the Moderates had taken eare to ensure that they outnumbered the Extremists at the Surat session. The Extremists were obviously wrong in thinking that their vast following in the eountry would be almost automatieally translated into a majority at the Congress. They probably also failed to reckon with the fact that although a large number of Congressmen sympathized with Extremist views—openly or secretly—they were still not prepared, both on personal and on publie grounds, to allow the Congress to be dominated by the Extremists. An overwhelming majority of Congressmen belonged to the relatively well-off elasses, who did not have the eourage of their eonvictions and who were afraid of openly defying the government. It was widely—and rightly—believed that the government did not like the Extremists and would perhaps ban the Congress if it eame to be dominated by them. With all his friendship and respeet for Lajpat Rai, Gokhale was opposed to his eleetion as president of the 1907 Congress on the grounds that 'we eannot afford to flout Government at this stage, the authorities would throttle our movement in no time'.[1] When the ehips were down at Surat even known Extremist leaders and sympathizers like A.K. Dutt and Lajpat Rai preferred to go with the Moderates. This was not simply because they were annoyed at Extremist behaviour at the session. They evidently believed that it was safe for them to be with the Moderates and for the Congress to remain dominated by the Moderates. As Lajpat Rai wrote in 1909: 'I am of opinion that the best interests of the eountry demand, that the party ealled "Moderate" should retain the aetual control and management of the Congress; but that the other party should remain inside the Congress, and should exercise its influence in the way in which all strong minorities do.'[2]

The Moderate hawks were—or at least pretended to be—happy that the split, whieh they had regarded as being inevitable, had taken plaee. Interviewed by a 'Speeial Correspondent' of the *Times of India* almost immediately after the event, R.B. Ghose was reported to have said: 'He was glad, very glad, personally, that the split had oecurred. It was bound to eome sooner or later and it was better that it should come now and put an end to the paralysing influence of the Extremists on the praetieal progressive work of the Congress.'[3] P.M. Mehta told the same

interviewer that 'he had foreseen that separation was inevitable, unless [the] Congress were to submit itself to the rule of the Extremists. The aspirations of the Extremists were unreasonable and unrealisable and were such that the bulk of the Congress would not work on their lines. He and his friends had set before themselves one great article of their creed, which was that their immediate object was a steady, gradual improvement of all methods of Government, and though self-government was included in their aspirations, they looked upon it as the ultimate goal set very far off and not a thing they could hope or desire to attain to in the near future.' He said that he had already declared himself on one point and it was that boycott meant 'taking up a hostile and offensive attitude' towards the British to which the latter as 'the ruling class, might be expected to reply in kind and with greater effect'. He maintained that 'Mr. Tilak's influence among reputable people in other Provinces than his own rested on the fact that he managed to hang on to the Congress. Now that the split had come, people would find him out.' He concluded by saying: 'The Moderates had managed to avoid the grand mistake of using force against Mr. Tilak, which he very much desired they should do, and had so placed the onus of the split on Mr. Tilak. They themselves had done nothing which could bring discredit on their cause. Such discredit as was bound to be imputed would rest on Mr. Tilak.'[4] Another Moderate hawk, V.K. Iyer of Madras, expressed his happiness over the split and remarked that 'Mr. Tilak and his followers are like a diseased limb gangrened to the core which ought to be amputated.'[5]

On 15 January 1908 Gokhale saw Dunlop Smith, private secretary to the viceroy, in Calcutta and described how he had tried to conciliate the Extremists, but in vain. Dunlop Smith felt that Gokhale really welcomed the Surat split, as it cleared the air. 'He [Gokhale] said that the difference between the two parties may be very briefly put. It is this—that the Moderates wish to proceed along the lines along which Englishmen have made their political progress, viz. persistent and orderly agitation on constitutional lines. The Extremists, on the other hand, wish to avow open implacable hostility to the British Government and to work by secret methods based on those of the Russian Terrorists. There is no possibility of the two parties coming together again, although individuals will go over from one side to another, the line of cleavage will be always very marked.'[6]

The *Indian People* wrote on 2 January 1908: 'We are glad that the long-threatening parting has been effected, though in a somewhat tragic fashion.'[7] The *Indian Mirror* observed on 4 January 1908: 'It was well that Providence, in His infinite wisdom, effected the parting of ways. ... Let the doors of the Congress be shut with a loud bang in the face of those who are for violence, disloyalty, chaos and disorder.'[8]

Most Britons in India—whether official or non-official—were naturally glad that the Congress had broken up at Surat. Writing to the secretary of state, Morley, soon after the event, the viceroy, Minto, remarked: 'It is quite impossible to see how the Congress collapse will work out, but so far everything points to the disappearance of the Extremists and to some reasonable recognition by the Moderates of our intentions. I feel pretty sure that this will be the case for a time ... it is a great triumph for us.'[9] Morley, however, with his experience of the national movements in Ireland and other European countries, knew better. Almost prophetically he told Minto that the Surat episode meant 'the victory of Extremist over Moderate, going no further at this stage than the break-up of the Congress, but pointing to a future stage in which the Congress will have become an Extremist organisation'.[10]

Though at least a few Moderate leaders had expected a split in the Congress to take place at Surat and also anticipated some disorder at the session, it is doubtful whether even one of them was prepared for what actually happened on 27 December 1907. The Moderate leaders were, of course, determined to retain the control of the Congress in their own hands and, if necessary, to expel the Extremists, but how were both these objects to be achieved amidst the chaos and ruin of Surat? The idea of convening a convention of all those delegates to the Congress who subscribed to a definite creed first occurred to V.K. Iyer, a talented and masterful Moderate from Madras.[11] It was readily agreed to by other Moderate leaders and a requisition was drawn up calling 'a National Convention' to meet on the afternoon of 28 December 1907 of all those delegates who subscribed to the following:

'(1) That the attainment by India of self-government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing members of the British Empire and participation by her in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members is the goal of our political aspirations.

'(2) That the advance towards this goal is to be by strictly constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reform of [the] existing system of administration and by promoting *National Unity,* fostering public spirit, and improving the condition of the mass of the people.

'(3) And that all meetings held for the promotion of the aims and objects above indicated have to be conducted in an orderly manner with due submission to the authority of those that are entrusted with the power to control their procedure. ...'[12]

The Convention, whose proceedings have been discussed in chapter four, appointed a committee, consisting of over 100 leading Congressmen from all parts of the country, to frame a constitution for the Congress on the lines laid down in the first two paragraphs of the declaration given above and signed by all its members. The committee met informally at four o'clock the same afternoon at the residence of Mehta and tentatively decided their programme of action.[13] Soon afterwards the Moderates held 'a Conference of the Congress ... in the Congress Pandal under the Presidentship of Babu Surendranath Bannerji to informally pass the Resolutions that would have been formally passed by the Congress if everything had gone on smoothly'.[14]

The Extremists also held a conference of their own in their 'camp' on the afternoon of 28 December 1907. It was presided over by Aurobindo Ghose. Tilak, who was the principal speaker on the occasion, described the gathering as representing 'the middle class of Congressmen ... not a Nationalists' Congress but a conference of Congress delegates'. He regretted that a split had taken place in the Congress, which was a 'youthful organization', 'the only organization that represented the whole country', and one 'on which they had spent lakhs of rupees'. According to him, the real reason for the split was that 'some high persons managing the affairs of the Congress—especially the Surat Congress—were firmly determined to bring down the Congress from the high pedestal it occupied a year ago and make it an All-India Moderate Congress'. Incident after incident showed how 'the Bombay Moderate clique had in their mind a plan by which the Congress was to be thrown back so that the ideals and methods of the Congress might fall in with the present views of the Government'. The time had come when 'they should manifest more of a resisting spirit than a desire to please the authorities'. 'The principle of representation and unanimity had been abandoned this year [by the Moderates]. The only safeguard which prevented the Congress from being wrecked on provincial diversity was lost sight of [by them] this year.' The Moderates would soon find out

that nothing useful could be gained by rallying round the banner of the British government. 'Experience would teach them that the position they had taken was not logical, but suicidal. But what were they to do until they [the Moderates] found out their mistake and both the parties were convinced that the split was ruinous to both? ... Could they do anything by which they could keep up the fire burning until the small light which they might be able to preserve grew into a magnificent lamp?' Tilak himself proposed the appointment of a small committee, which 'would work not in the spirit of rivalry with the other party but in the spirit of co-operation and by the grace of God an opportunity might present itself when they would again be united'.[15] The meeting concluded with the appointment of what came to be known as the Congress Continuation Committee, whose object was to watch developments and work for the convening of a regular and united Congress.

Tilak's speech at Surat on 28 December 1907 confirms what the *Mahratta* later remarked: 'In fact the break-up of the Congress and the desire for reunion were almost simultaneous.'[16] But for a long time the desire for reconciliation was stronger and more vocal among the Extremists than among the Moderates. The reasons for this are not far to seek. While the Moderates remained in control of the Congress, the Extremists found themselves expelled from it. The Extremists also realized the dangers of a divided Congress not only for the national cause, but also for their own sakes. The Congress was their shield and armour. The Anglo-Indians had long desired the Extremists to be separated from the Moderates so that, among other things, they could easily be identified and struck down by the authorities. In the weeks and months immediately following the split, the country witnessed the apparently strange phenomenon of the Moderates expressing satisfaction or happiness over the event and trying to treat it as a settled fact, and the Extremists expressing shock or grief and suing for peace and reconciliation.

Taking their cue from Tilak, most of the Extremist leaders and newspapers in western India argued that the differences between the two parties were not irreconcilable, that the split at Surat was accidental and unfortunate, that Mehta and his close associates were more to be blamed for it than anybody else, and that steps should immediately be taken to bring about a reunion. The same line was adopted at the provincial conference held at Dhulia and at the various district conferences organized in Maharashtra between March and May 1908.

Tilak called on R.C. Dutt in early March 1908 when the latter was in Bombay on his way to England and requested him to act as a peacemaker. 'Tilak came to see me', Dutt wrote privately to Gokhale on 11 March 1908, 'and preached to me for *an hour* about reconciliation of the two parties. All that he got from me was my firm declaration that if the Moderates recede now from their published "Creed", they will be committing *political suicide.*'[17] Interviewed for the *Phoenix* by Dr H. Vishindas at Karachi on 17 March 1908, Dutt remarked: 'He [Tilak] was anxious to make up differences and assured me that the Surat fracas would not be repeated. But I failed to be convinced that union was advisable in the near future, and I told Mr. Tilak so. Let each party work according to its lights for the present. That will be far better than any artificial union.' Asked by Dr Vishindas about his reaction to the general attempts at reconciliation being currently made, Dutt replied: 'I think it would be injudicious for Moderates to join hands with the other party at the present moment. They have already given publicity to their political "creed"; and it would be suicidal on their part to cancel the creed, now that the world has been informed of it. If they do so the world would not think well of them. They must retain their loyalty to their creed. They are pledged to it for the present; and I am afraid the other party will

not accept their creed. It is, I think, best for the two parties to work along parallel lines for the present. Of course, their goal being the same—the regeneration of the country—they will meet sooner or later, but under the present circumstances it is in the interests of both the parties as well as the country that they should work each by itself. I am very doubtful if they can work together at the present moment. I was present at the Benares Congress and also at the Calcutta Congress; and the three years' observation leads me to think that they cannot work together for some time to come.'[18] Dutt was not a Moderate hawk. A careful examination of his views indicates that though he was in early 1908 convinced that the Moderates could not go back on their declared 'creed' or work together with the Extremists 'for the present', he did not entirely rule out the possibility of a reconciliation between the two sections of Indian nationalists in the future.

The *Mahratta* wrote on 1 March 1908: 'The U.P. is a benighted tract of the country and benighted tracts are generally the strongholds of moderation.'[19] The editor of the paper, N.C. Kelkar, and Lajpat Rai travelled to the United Provinces in order to influence the provincial conference there, scheduled to meet at Lucknow on 29 February-1 March 1908, to hold out the olive branch, but their efforts were foiled by the local Moderate leaders. It was a half-jubilant and half-frightened C.Y. Chintamani who informed Gokhale from Lucknow on 14 March 1908: 'The [Provincial] Conference passed off very well. Lala Lajpat Rai used his influence to get a resolution passed that the All-India Congress Committee should take steps to hold the next Congress, but he failed. (This is confidential. He came here secretly at the instance of Mr. Tilak and returned in the same manner. This was a day before the Conference. He came again publicly after the Conference. He is anxious that his private visit should remain a secret.) Mr. Kelkar of the *Mahratta* was at Allahabad and came here as well—but was powerless—for mischief. These provinces seem still to be a stronghold of our party. ... Babu Ganga Prasad and I think that the meeting of the Convention Committee should not be held at Allahabad but at Bombay or Bhusaval. Bombay and Madras will not be well represented at Allahabad whereas Bengal and the Punjab will be, and we shall run the risk of the wobblers carrying the day for reunion with the Tilakites against us.'[20]

Even before the Congress opened at Surat on 26 December 1907, Gokhale had drafted a constitution for the organization which was to be placed before the session for its approval. This draft constitution was 'published a day or two earlier'. Among other things, it defined in its 'preamble' the 'ultimate goal' of the Congress, made it obligatory for the members of the provincial and district Congress committees to 'accept the ... creed of the Congress', and restricted attendance at future Congress sessions only to those delegates who had been elected by these Congress committees. The relevant part of the proposed constitution read as follows:

'The Indian National Congress has for its ultimate goal the attainment by India of Self-Government similar to that enjoyed by other members of the British Empire and a participation by her in the privileges and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with the other members; and it seeks to advance towards this goal by strictly constitutional means, by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration, and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and improving the condition of the mass of the people.

'Those who accept the foregoing creed of the Congress, shall be members of the Provincial Congress Committee.

'All who accept the foregoing creed of the Congress ... shall be entitled to become members of a District Congress Committee.

'From the year 1908, delegates to the Congress shall be elected by Provincial and District Congress Committees only.'[21]

The object of this draft constitution was obvious. It aimed at defining—clearly and definitely—the 'creed' of the Congress and at excluding from it all those who either subscribed to the ideal of self-government for India outside the British empire or to its achievement through extra-constitutional means. Both by laying down the 'creed' and by the effect its imposition was likely to have, Moderate leaders wanted to ensure for themselves and to assure their British rulers that the Congress was a constitutional and loyalist organization. There was a good deal of truth in the Extremists' charge that the Moderates were anxious to please the authorities and that the draft constitution 'intended to convert the Congress from a national into a sectional movement'.[22]

The over nine hundred delegates who attended the Convention called by the Moderate leaders at Surat on 28 December 1907 were required to subscribe expressly to the 'creed' of the Congress almost in the same form in which it was laid down in the preamble to the draft constitution prepared by Gokhale.[23] The Extremists were, therefore, justified when in their 'version' of the split at Surat, published on 31 December 1907, they remarked that the Moderate leaders wanted that 'no one, who did not accept this new creed, was to be a member of Provincial or District Committees, or possibly even a delegate to the Congress' from 1908 onwards.[24] 'This', in their view, 'was the chief feature of retrogression, which Sir P.M. Mehta and his party wanted to carry out this year at a safe place like Surat.'[25]

The acceptance of the 'creed' was the essential basis on which the various provincial Convention committees were formed in early 1908. Naturally most Extremists stayed away from them. The Extremist leaders utilized their time between January and mid-April 1908, when the Convention Committee appointed at Surat to draft a constitution for the organization was scheduled to meet, in organizing support among Congressmen all over the country for a compromise between the two parties. The two bases which they suggested for a possible compromise were (i) the dropping of the 'creed' or at least not making it obligatory for every Congressman to subscribe to it in writing, and (ii) the convening of a regular session of the Congress by the old All-India Congress Committee formed at Calcutta in 1906.

A Bengali Moderate was generally regarded as being more Extremist than Moderate by contemporary observers. This was probably because the Bengali Moderate was involved in an agitation against the partition of his province which was far in advance of anything that had ever been attempted by his counterpart in any other part of India and which smacked more of Extremism than Moderatism. Being engaged in a common struggle against an alien government, a Bengali Moderate felt closer to his Extremist ally in his own province than to a Moderate in any other part of India. In no other part of the country did so many Moderates support the Extremist cry for a united Congress as they did in Bengal. This is not very difficult to explain. Both the Moderates and the Extremists in Bengal realized the importance of securing the support of a united Congress in their fight for a united Bengal. Moreover, both equally disliked the Bombay Moderate clique, whom they considered to be mainly responsible for causing the split at Surat by their autocratic behaviour and ultra-loyal stance.

Soon after the Surat split even such Extremist organs in Bengal as the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Bande Mataram* raised the cries of 'forgive and forget' and 'no creed higher than the creed of unity'.[26] Despite the warning of the *Englishman* to the Bengal Moderates that if they compromised with the local Extremists it would mean 'the exclusion of Bengal from the

Congress',[27] and despite the fact that even in Bengal most Moderates looked upon the Extremists as 'enthusiastic intruders and interlopers' and most Extremists regarded the Moderates as being 'played-out old fossils',[28] the two parties signed 'a temporary truce'[29] at the provincial conference held at Pabna on 11-12 February 1908. The 'creed' was disregarded and a resolution favouring reunion in the Congress was passed.[30] Though the draft constitution for the Congress prepared by the Bengal section of the Convention Committee in early April 1908 defined the 'objects' of the organization, and also made it obligatory for members of the various Congress committees and affiliated associations to signify their 'acceptance of the principles of the Congress', it did not require each delegate to the Congress session to do so.[31] In this respect it differed from the draft constitution prepared by the Bombay section of the Convention Committee which not only gave far greater prominence to what were called the 'Creed and Conditions', but also insisted that 'Every delegate to the Indian National Congress and every member or applicant for membership of the Provincial or District or other Congress Committee ... shall have to subscribe [in writing] to the ... "Creed and Conditions".'[32] Even the Bengal Conventionists' draft was disliked by the Extremists, who denounced it as being 'intended to keep the entire control of the Congress in the hands of the old coterie',[33] and its publication 'set a sharper edge on the differences' between the two parties,[34] but it was certainly less offensive to them than the Bombay Conventionists' draft where the 'creed' occurred 'very aggressively'.[35]

At a public meeting jointly organized by the Moderates and the Extremists at Calcutta on 8 April 1908 a resolution was unanimously adopted which requested the Congress Continuation Committee and the Convention Committee to settle the differences in the Congress on the basis of the following points: (i) agree to hold the adjourned meeting of the Congress of 1907; (ii) accept the four Calcutta resolutions; (iii) accept Rash Behari Ghose as president; (iv) request Ghose to call the Congress; (v) no formulation of 'creed' or 'objects' which would exclude delegates; and (vi) accept the delegates of 1907 and more.[36]

Shortly before the Convention Committee met at Allahabad on 18-19 April, the veteran Congress leader of Madras, G.S. Iyer, addressed a letter to Gokhale in which he expressed his inability because of bad health to be present at the meeting, but placed before the Convention his views as to how and in what spirit the 'servants of the motherland' should meet the situation. It would be a calamity, he said, if the split that took place at Surat were to be perpetuated. He warned Gokhale and the other Moderate leaders not to be misled by the feigned sympathy of the Anglo-Indians for them, as they would like to crush both the new and the old party by turns. Affecting sympathy with the Moderates, the British bureaucracy in India would first place restrictions on the liberty of the new party and crush it on vague and unfounded charges of sedition, and then it would turn to the old party. The repression of the new party would cause resentment in the minds of some at least of the old party and these would develop sympathy with the former. An extreme party would soon be formed and the Moderates would be called upon to separate from their fellows, who would be denounced as seditious and disloyal. There were indeed moderate and conservative elements in Indian society with whom the British bureaucracy in the country really sympathized. They were big landholders and the wrecks of the old feudal aristocracy who looked to the British bureaucracy to fix their vanishing prestige and whom the latter itself needed. 'Men like yourself and Sir P.M. Mehta', G.S. Iyer went on to say, 'may swear ever so hard by the constitution and law, but are really hateful to this clique.' Iyer maintained that both the Moderates and the Extremists would suffer

if the split were not healed. He advised Gokhale and his Moderate friends to forget the incidents of Surat as a bad dream and restore union in the Congress. Personally he considered the proposed 'creed' of the Congress to be 'meaningless' and favoured its abandonment, but he advised the Extremists not to object to it, for it could not restrain people from saying and doing anything and the goal was so far off that before its attainment they would all die. Instead of quarrelling about a distant ideal Congressmen should concentrate on agitating for the implementation of the four Calcutta resolutions and on responding to the new challenges which the organization was facing.[37]

Neither passionate appeals for unity in the Congress nor wise counsels for its future welfare seemed to prevail with the Moderate hawks, led by Mehta. Their attitude towards the Extremists after Surat was one of 'good riddance' and 'never again'. They came determined to the Convention Committee meeting at Allahabad on 18-19 April to frame a constitution for the organization that would keep a large section of the Extremists out of it and prevent a repetition of the ugly scenes enacted at Surat. As the editor of the *Leader,* C.Y. Chintamani, recalled more than three years later, 'the point of view which almost exclusively weighed with the Convention Committee in 1908 was how to keep out from the Congress a certain undesirable element which did its worst to bring discredit on it and to render its deliberations impossible, and which so far succeeded in its reprehensible attempt as to have compelled the preceding year's session to disperse without the transaction of business. The disgrace of Surat was naturally before the mind's eye of those who met at Allahabad in April 1908.'[38] Not unexpectedly, therefore, the proposals made at the Convention Committee meeting by some of the Moderate doves, particularly from Bengal and Panjab, for some sort of accommodation with the more responsible and sober elements among the Extremists, were brushed aside by the Moderate hawks, who came mainly from Bombay and the United Provinces. The Committee adopted a rigid and over-elaborate constitution, containing the controversial 'creed', to which every member of a Congress committee or an affiliated body and every delegate to the Congress session was required to subscribe in writing. Disregarding suggestions made for the convening of the adjourned Congress, the Convention Committee arranged to hold a new session of the Congress under the new rules.[39]

Disappointment over the results of the Allahabad meeting of the Convention Committee was generally expressed throughout the country, particularly by the Extremists. In a leader entitled 'Is It the Parting of the Ways?', the *Mahratta* wrote on 26 April 1908 that the Convention Committee had 'not exhibited statesmanship'. They had no right to usurp the name of the Congress; nor could only about thirty of them decree that there would be no reunion in the Congress. Who should convene the Congress was a subordinate question. Some rules of debate had become absolutely necessary. 'As for the declaration of the aims and objects of the Congress there was every chance that at the next session the same would have been substantially passed. The contents of the creed would have probably been acceptable as a proposition.' The *Mahratta,* however, regretted that the signing of the 'creed' had been made obligatory, for it would 'exclude certain Nationalists'. 'The Nationalists', the paper argued, 'had no objection to work with the Moderates but they wanted to make the latter of their own mind if possible. The Moderates having no chance to permanently dominate the Nationalists, wanted to turn the Surat affair to advantage and were determined to separate themselves from the latter.'[40] The Bengali Extremists coupled their dissatisfaction over the outcome of the Convention Committee meeting with a severe criticism of their provincial representatives on

the Committee for their alleged failure to carry out their mandate. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote on 24 April 1908 that if the Bengal representatives on the Convention Committee 'instead of allowing themselves to be hypnotised by the followers of Sir P. Mehta, who came determined to strangle the Congress to death, had offered a bold front and told them that they could not forsake the Congress and their Bengal colleagues for the sake of the Convention, the Mehtaites would have been brought to their senses'. The paper insisted that the Bengal Conventionists must part company with the Bombay Conventionists. 'Indeed, how can they associate with those who are so devoid of patriotism as to kill the National Congress simply because they cannot love Tilak?'[41] The *Bande Mataram* maintained that 'the fate of the Congress is not a point which can be decided by a majority of a party caucus'. It denounced both 'the Bombay separatists' and the Bengal Conventionists. 'The whole of Maharashtra', the paper argued, 'was for union, Punjab was against exclusion, even the U.P. Moderates had not dared to advocate separation in open Conference. [A determined] protest from Bengal, supported by Punjab, would have forced Bombay Moderatism to terms.' The *Bande Mataram* accused the Bengal Moderates of putting the party before the country and the Congress. 'They have preferred Pherozeshah Mehta and Wacha to India. With their party then and not with their country let them stand or fall in the future. Let them serve their master Pherozeshah in future and no longer pretend to serve India.'[42]

Undeterred by the results of the Convention Committee meeting at Allahabad in April 1908, the Extremists, particularly those in Maharashtra, Bengal and Madras, continued to speak and act in favour of holding a united Congress in December 1908. For example, the Bombay provincial conference, which was held at Dhulia from 27 April to 1 May 1908 and was dominated by the Extremists, adopted a resolution which said that 'this Conference is of opinion that it is necessary to make a united effort to arrange for the holding of the Indian National Congress as before in December next and appoints a Committee ... to place themselves in communication with the leaders of all parties throughout the country, including the Convention Committee and the Congress Continuation Committee, with a view to that end'.[43] The resolution was moved by Tilak himself. His close associate N.C. Kelkar was appointed secretary of the committee which was to work for reunion, while its president, G.V. Joshi, was an intimate friend of Gokhale. Similar sentiments for reunion were expressed in May at the Kolaba district conference[44] and in June at the Tanjore district conference[45] and a private conference held at the Indian Association, Calcutta.[46] Tilak 'had said that he would do the utmost in his power to have a united Congress' and he 'was soon to go to Bengal and Punjab to consult S.N. Banerjea and Lajpat Rai on this point'[47] before he was arrested in the last week of June 1908 and a month later sentenced to six years' imprisonment.

Tilak's prosecution immensely added to his already great popularity in the country. It even earned for him the sympathy and admiration of many of his critics. On the other hand, it dealt another fatal blow to the fast-waning popularity of the Moderate leaders, some of whom were directly or indirectly held responsible by the general public for Tilak's suffering. On 17 July 1908 Gokhale wrote from London to Vamanrao Patwardhan: 'The telegraphic summaries of Mr. Tilak's defence have made a very good impression on friends of India in this country. This is the real Tilak, as he was and would be but for the pernicious influence of those around him.'[48] Again, on 23 July 1908, Gokhale wrote to the same correspondent that Tilak's 'conviction and sentence will really be a great blow to our party, for part of the resentment against the Government is likely to be directed also against us'.[49] Tilak's great opponent, the

Indu Prakash of Bombay, was moved to write: 'The undoubted ability and attainments of Mr. Tilak, his simplicity, his indomitable energy and ceaseless activity, the purity of his private life, explain the hold and influence he has been able to gather round him like an irresistible and surging tide and the admiration he exhorts from opponents no less than from friends.'[50]

Tilak's imprisonment deprived the Extremists of their most powerful leader. Soon afterwards many other Extremist leaders were arrested or forced to leave the country. In their desperation the small number of physical force Extremists had already taken to the bomb and the revolver, and the government had reacted to their anarchical crimes with great swiftness and severity. By the last quarter of 1908 it seemed as if the backbone of the Extremist party had been broken. After a temporary quietus the cry for reunion was again raised by the constitutional Extremists. Before leaving for England, G.S. Khaparde issued a circular letter on 13 August 1908 in which he expressed the hope that 'a common platform on which Indian gentlemen of all shades of opinion may fairly be expected to meet and work together would ... be found'.[51] Week after week papers like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the *Mahratta* carried leaders and letters from their readers urging the desirability of holding a united Congress. Only very occasionally was an angry young Extremist found saying that a union with the Moderates was impossible to achieve and unbecoming for the Extremists to ask for, and that they should instead try to organize a separate Congress of their own.[52]

Realizing that Bengal provided the most congenial soil for promoting proposals for reunifying the Congress, a few Extremist leaders from other parts of the country but mainly from central and western India, such as M.R. Bodas, N.C. Kelkar, C.V. Vaidya, B.B. Deshpande, N.R. Alekar, S.P. Deshpande, B.S. Moonje, R.K. Desai, P. Iyer, and Dedar Buksh, travelled to Calcutta early in November 1908. With the help of some local Congress leaders belonging to both parties, notably B.N. Basu and M.L. Ghose, they organized a conference at the office of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 6 November 1908, at which the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

'This Conference is of opinion that the Constitution and Rules of the Indian National Congress Organisation as drafted by the Allahabad Convention Committee cannot be binding or acceptable unless and until they receive the sanction of the Indian National Congress.'[53]

After a good deal of debate, the Conference also 'unanimously agreed to the following terms of a proposed compromise for a United Congress':

'(1) The first article of the Convention Constitution in which it is stated that self-government within the Empire is the goal of the Congress and constitutional agitation its method to be signed absolutely.

'(2) The rest of the Constitution relating to rules, etc., to be signed tentatively for the next Congress only.

'(3) A Committee like the previous A.I.C.C., composed of members of the different Provinces and elected by a majority of delegates from the different Provinces present at the Congress, will be formed at the Congress to frame a Constitution which is to be placed before the next Congress for sanction and confirmation.

'(4) The leading members of the Convention Committee to agree to the passing of the 4 Calcutta Resolutions.

'(5) If the 4 Calcutta Resolutions are not carried the non-Conventionists will be at liberty to withdraw from the Congress and they will be regarded as absolved from the obligation incurred by signing the aims and objects of the Constitution as framed by the Convention Committee and they will not be at liberty [*sic*] to participate in the proceedings of the Congress.

'(6) District Committees fixed in terms of the Constitution shall be affiliated and recognised by the Provincial Congress Committee as a matter of course tentatively for the next Congress.

'(7) Article I is not to be changed except by the unanimous consent of all Provinces.

'(8) Dr. Rash Behari Ghose is to be accepted as President this year.'[54]

B.N. Basu undertook 'to place the matter before the Convention leaders of the Province and use his influence with them in persuading them to accept it, as also to communicate the result of his efforts to the promoters of the Conference by 20th [November].[55] It was also resolved that should negotiations fail steps should be taken to devise means for reviving the Congress on old lines.'[56]

Before taking the matter up formally with his Moderate colleagues on the Bengal section of the Convention Committee on 15 November 1908 or at the next Congress, B.N. Basu wrote to P.M. Mehta on 8 November 1908, inviting his reaction to the proposals.[57] Mehta's reaction was firm and forthright. As regards the 'creed', he wrote: 'The events which took place in Nagpur and Surat and the circumstances under which the Congress broke up in Surat make it now absolutely essential that the unwritten law on which the Congress was based from the very commencement, namely, that it was to be a legal and constitutional movement carried on by our organization which loyally accepted British rule, should be now put in express words, at once clear and unambiguous, unassailable by any such dialectical chicanery as was practised in the last Congress [at Calcutta] on the Boycott resolution when the words agreed to as meaning one thing were attempted to be explained into another and a very different thing. It is no use shutting one's eyes to the fact, within our own knowledge, (I can speak with authority as regards [the] so-called Extremist leaders in the Bombay Presidency) that some secretly cherish the idea of using the Congress for aims and methods not altogether constitutional. It is impossible therefore to let any doubt exist as to the character of the Congress organisation and movement.' About the plea for a united Congress, Mehta remarked: 'I cannot help saying that there is a great deal of mawkish sentimentality in the passionate appeals for union at all costs. For my part, I think it is most desirable that each sets of distinct convictions should have their separate Congress. To jumble them up in one body confuses the real understanding of the extent to which opinion really tends in one direction or another, and it is not possible to make out what are the dimensions of the cleavage and difference of opinion existing on any particular question. It is, therefore, desirable that persons holding nearly the same opinions and principles should organise themselves into bodies where they can expound them and lay them before the public in a clear and consistent form. The public could then have the issues clearly before them, and their deliberate judgement can declare itself by the growing favour they would accord to a particular association. For God's sake let us have done with all inane and slobbery whine about unity where there is really none. Let each consistent body of views and principles have its own Congress in an honest and straightforward way, and let God, i.e. truth and wisdom judge between us all.'[58]

Mehta's letter to Basu, which was given wide publicity in the press, increased his unpopularity with most of his politically-conscious countrymen, particularly in Bengal, but it served to put a stop—at least temporarily—to the efforts which were then being made for bringing about a united Congress. It 'produced a stunning effect on the Bengal Moderates'.[59] The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote that the 'slap' was meant not only for the Moderate leaders of Bengal, 'but for the entire educated people of Bengal. We really wonder how can Babus

Surendra Nath, Bhupendra Nath, Ambika Charan and other Bengal Conventionists agree to associate with one who can insult the whole Bengalee race in this impudent and outrageous manner and advocate a split in the Congress.'[60] The *Mahratta* wrote on 29 November 1908 that Mehta's latest behaviour was in 'the usual style of a Generalissimo to appear on the scene after the advance skirmishers report that the ground is cleared'. It described Mehta's letter as 'unhappy in wording and objectionable in import', but added that it could not 'but admire the party discipline which makes prominent Bengali leaders submit to such literary whipping without a word of protest'.[61]

With the hopes of a compromise dashed at least for the time being after the publication of Mehta's letter to Basu, a meeting of the Congress Continuation Committee, appointed by the Extremist party at Surat on 28 December 1907, was held at Bombay on 28 November 1908. The meeting, which was attended mainly by a few Extremist leaders from central and western India, decided to hold the twenty-fourth session of the Congress at Nagpur in late December 1908.[62] A circular letter to this effect was issued under the signature of the secretary to the Committee from Bombay on 30 November. It referred to the failure of 'all attempts at reconciliation with the Conventionists' and the 'duty to hold the regular Congress'. It declared the forthcoming Madras meeting of the Conventionists to be 'unconstitutional' and claimed that the proposed Nagpur Congress was 'no rival meeting' but 'the regular session' of the Congress.[63] The move to call a separate Congress of Extremists was not generally liked even in Extremist circles and it is doubtful whether it would have been a success. Luckily, however, the government prohibited the holding of the proposed assembly at Nagpur. In a letter issued to the press in late December 1908. M.R. Bodas, secretary of the Congress Continuation Committee, said: '... from the beginning I have never favoured a separate or sectional Congress and have always advised my Nationalist friends to avoid the mistake which the Conventionists are committing. Like Babu Motilal Ghose, Hon. Mr. Vijayaraghava Chariar of Salem, Mr. Bhagat of Lahore and many other veterans whose opinions are really valuable, I have always been for a United Congress of all parties or no Congress at all. A Congress that is sectional or exclusive or extremely unpopular is in my opinion not worth having at all, whatever be its other merits. I have sufficient patience to hope that a day will soon come when party passions will abate and the Moderate leaders for whom personally I entertain the highest respect, will retrieve the error by reverting to the popular traditions of the Congress. ... I regard the action of the Nagpur authorities [in banning the Extremist Congress] as a providential blessing in disguise that has saved our over-enthusiastic Nagpur friends from a grave mistake.'[64]

The latter half of 1908 was a time of great confusion and excitement in India and many Moderate leaders doubted whether a successful session of the Congress could be held at the end of the year. Some of them even toyed with the old idea of holding a Congress session in London.[65] But with the Extremist party disintegrating, the Anglo-Indians becoming more and more anxious to 'rally the Moderates', and the prospects of constitutional reforms brightening, they were emboldened by September 1908 to decide in favour of organizing the next session of the Congress at Madras. As in most other places in the country, Congressmen in Madras were divided and demoralized, but in V.K. Iyer the local Moderates had a determined and resourceful leader who could be relied upon to deliver the goods. Overcoming a good deal of local sulkiness and obstruction, he made the usual arrangements for the meeting of the Congress. Some Moderate leaders wanted Mehta to preside over the session, but others feared that 'it would alienate Bengal',[66] so Rash Behari Ghose was elected president. Hume and

Wedderburn sent their blessings from England.[67] The British officials in Madras, including the governor, showed great cordiality and co-operation.[68]

At the Madras session of the Congress in December 1908 the Extremists were denounced and disowned and great enthusiasm was shown for the promised constitutional reforms. 'Those who have gone out of us,' said Rash Behari Ghose, 'were never of us ... Our paths lie wide apart, and a yawning gulf separates us.'[69] S.N. Banerjea described Morley as the 'Simon de Montford of the future Parliament of India'.[70] Gokhale looked forward to 'responsible association' with the British administration in India.[71] But the attendance was poor (of the 626 delegates who attended, 404 came from Madras, 134 from Bombay, 36 from Bengal, 23 from U.P., 12 from Berar, 5 from Bihar, 7 from Bengal, 23 from Burma, and 1 from C.P.);[72] the proceedings were dull and lifeless; and an atmosphere of make-believe prevailed.

'So they call the Madras Congress the "Indian National" Congress; the nation has very little to do with it', commented the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 31 December 1908. The paper maintained that the delegates had not been elected by regular constituencies, but had instead elected each other. It claimed with pardonable exaggeration that 'the bulk of the educated middle classes have now seceded' from the Congress.[73] The *Swadeshamitran,* 29 December 1908, regretted that in Ghose's presidential address at the Congress there was no mention of such matters as the deportations, the hardships caused by the high prices of food, and the increase in military expenditure. The paper argued that the sufferings of the masses could not be removed by Morley's reforms. 'Our patriots should not forget', it went on to say, 'that eighty per cent of the Indian population are extremely poor, that if the educated and the well-to-do classes are taken together, they would constitute but ten per cent of the population. How to improve the lot of these poor people, how to bring happiness and comfort to the destitute and the diseased crores of our population, should constitute the principal object of this Congress which contains so many partiorts.'[74]

P.J. Padshah, a not unfriendly commentator, wrote in the January 1909 issue of *East & West:* 'The last Congress was by no means an enthusiastic Congress. The reception of its President on the day of his advent in Madras was cheerful and exciting but not very fervent. ... The conduct of the delegates on the first day of the opening of the Congress was even less cheerful and more subdued. A pall of gloom seemed to have hung over the whole pandal where the delegates had congregated. A feeling of something oppressive ran supreme; there was something lurking which chilled the ardour of even the most ardent delegates. Some had come to rejoice, bud did not; others had come to weep, but did not. There was restraint in their manner, hesitancy in their action.'[75] After discussing some of the possible causes of 'this subjugation of feelings by the delegates', Padshah concluded by saying: 'I have been always under the impression that the Congress was an independent body of men, endeavouring for years to interpret the feelings, wishes, and aspirations of their countrymen to the rulers. This year, it seemed, the function of the Congress changed. It looked as if the leaders of the Congress changed. It looked as if the leaders of the Congress met together to interpret the wishes and feelings of the rulers to the mass of their countrymen. It is quite true that by dint of political education many of our rulers—many, if not most of the officials—have become "congressised". It does not follow that the Congressists should be "officialised". I cannot get rid of the impression that a good many of the delegates, and almost all their leaders, have been officialised. They have begun to talk and think in the language of officials. There is, therefore, the danger ahead of which it is desirable to take warning in time. The Congress will have

abdicated its proper functions when it begins to interpret for the Government and not to the Government. Its usefulness in the past has been very great indeed. It has achieved splendid results in the past by continuing the line of action formulated by its great initiators. A departure from that line of action may entail unpleasant consequences. The Congress may cease to be an independent institution, and develop into an organ of the official classes. The official classes can, however, speak for themselves and with very great effect, but if the National Congress as an unofficial body is gone, who will speak for the people?'[76]

The Convention was no more united than the Congress, the *Pioneer* had noted in April 1908, and its advice to the Moderates was that unless they cut themselves adrift from the Congress completely they would not be able to follow constitutional methods.[77] The *Pioneer*'s advice to the Moderates had appeared 'strange'[78] to the latter at the time, for they had apparently succeeded in retaining their control over the Congress and expelling the Extremists from it without losing the sympathy and support of a large section of the educated classes in the country. But ten years later, when the situation had changed and they were themselves reduced to a minority in the Congress, the Moderates did act on the advice given by the *Pioneer* in 1908. The disunity in the Convention of which the *Pioneer* spoke was only too evident in 1908. With the passage of time it increased, and to it were also added debility and demoralization.

At the Madras session in December 1908 no province was willing to host the next Congress. Somehow Panjab was persuaded to extend the invitation, mainly on the ground that no session of the Congress had been held in Panjab since 1900.[79] Political life in Panjab had always been weak and disorganized, and even the few Congressmen in the province were at that time badly divided and demoralized. H.K. Lal, the most prominent Moderate of Panjab, had some business acumen and organizing ability, but he had few qualities of leadership. Moreover, he was 'one of the most unpopular persons ... in the province amongst a certain section of his countrymen'.[80] As the usual preparations for holding the Congress session got under way—with attempts at forming a reception committee and raising funds—opposition to the proposed gathering at Lahore became increasingly articulate and bitter. A large section of the Hindus in Panjab had already during the last three to four years become hostile to the Congress and its policies which, it felt, had gravely damaged the interests of the community. The undue favour shown to the Muslims in the Morley-Minto scheme of reforms served only to increase the hostility of many Hindus towards the Congress and to prompt them to concentrate on strengthening the Hindu Sabha, which had been organized in 1907 to protect and promote their communal interests and as a counterpoise to the Muslim League. Dissatisfaction both with the local and the national Moderate leadership made even several veteran Congressmen in Panjab, such as Lajpat Rai, Hans Raj and Amolak Ram, not only withhold their co-operation but also actively oppose the idea of holding the 1909 Congress at Lahore. In fact, at one stage the situation in Panjab became so grave that it began to be seriously suggested by prominent Congressmen—both within Panjab and outside—that the venue of the 1909 Congress should be shifted to some other province or even to London.[81]

The pressure for holding a united Congress was not so marked in 1909 as it had been in the previous year, but it had not entirely disappeared. The opposition to the meeting of the Congress in Panjab would not have been so strong if it had held out any hope of reunion in the ranks of Congressmen. Under the leadership of H.K. Lal the Lahore Congress was not expected to make any move towards Congress unity. Even the hope that Congressmen from the other provinces would make any move towards reunion in the organization at the forthcoming

Congress—or succeed if they dared attempt it—was completely dashed with the election in September 1909 of P.M. Mehta as its president. Mehta's election was not liked by many Moderates, particularly in Bengal, where he was extremely unpopular because of his unconcealed dislike for Bengalis and his almost total lack of sympathy with their anti-partition agitation. P.C. Ray, a leading Moderate of Calcutta, assistant secretary of the Bengal provincial Congress committee and editor of the influential *Indian World,* publicly threatened that Bengal would secede from the Congress.[82]

'The political situation in the country', Gokhale wrote to Wedderburn on 24 September 1909, 'continues to be anxious not so much for the Government now as for the Constitutional Party. I fear one of our numerous disintegrations has overtaken us again—this time it is the national movement that appears to be going to pieces, throwing us back on Provincialism—and one grieves to find that there is no influence available anywhere in the country, capable of staying the process. The organization evolved by the genius of Mr. Hume out of the material prepared by a succession of workers in different parts of the country is crumbling to pieces and the effort of the nation's heart and mind that brought us together in that organization seems to have almost exhausted itself. The split at Surat, followed by the vigour with which the Government came down on the Extremists everywhere, has turned the whole Extremist party into active enemies of the national constitutional movement. And the "Moderates" placed between the officials and the Extremists, have not the necessary public spirit and energy of character to hold together effectively for long, though they are numerically strong in the country. In addition to the incessant attacks of the Extremists, the conduct of the Bengal "Moderates" is hastening the disintegration of the national movement. Bengal really has no leader on our side. Surendranath is an orator, but he has no great courage or backbone, and he cannot keep in hand the unruly pack whom he professes to lead. Moreover there is no doubt that the position of the constitutional party in Bengal has been rendered practically impossible by the Government's refusal to reconsider Partition and by the continued incarceration of the deportees. The feeling is general throughout the country that most of these deportees, if not all, are innocent men, that they have been deported simply because the Government wanted to make an exhibition of force and strike somewhere and it selected these men, because they were able and active. No one believes the explanations that are from time to time given by the authorities in the House of Commons and a sense of a great unredressed wrong is poisoning the public mind. In these circumstances, the whole movement of feeling in Bengal is towards extremism and Surendranath cannot help going with the current. The "Moderates" in other Provinces, however, see clearly the danger of drifting into the arms of extremism and they are determined to stand firm, and this, I fear means their separation before long from the Bengal "Moderates". When this separation comes, it will mean in practice the end of the Congress as at present constituted. The movement will still find a fair amount of support in Bombay, excluding the Deccan, Madras, United Provinces and Behar. But it will cease to be a movement in which all Provinces participate and it is bound rapidly to dwindle. The situation is further complicated by the fierce antagonism between Hindus and Mahomedans that has been rekindled by the open partiality which, the Hindus generally believe, has been shown by the Government to the Mahomedans in working out the details of the Reform Scheme. This antagonism has already led in Upper India to a movement for the formation of a Hindu League and the Punjab where the relations between the two communities are the worst is taking the lead in the matter. The movement is frankly anti-Mahomedan, as the Moslem League is frankly anti-Hindu, and both are anti-national.

'An agitation has been for some time past going on in Bengal that if Sir Pherozeshah Mehta is elected President of the Congress this year, Bengal should secede from the Congress. Surendranath has done absolutely nothing to discourage this agitation, which has given deep offence to Congressmen in other Provinces, and he has even thrown open the columns of the *Bengalee* to correspondents writing in support of the agitation. Sir Pherozeshah has now been elected by the Reception Committee at Lahore, with whom lay the final choice, and it now remains to be seen if Bengal carries out the childish and suicidal threat. If Bengal does secede, it will mean the absorption of the Bengal Moderates by the Bengal Extremists and it will also mean an end of a National Congress. Of course every effort will be made by those who are in a position to do so to dissuade the Bengal Moderates from pursuing the course, but the situation just now is full of anxiety.

'As I have told you in my last letter, there is, as far as I can see, no chance of a Congress session being held in London next April. Even if we emerge successfully from our present troubles, neither the men nor the money will, I am convinced, be forthcoming for a London session. Even a deputation of a few leading men is doubtful. ... It is possible that if the details of the Reform Scheme are worked out in as liberal a spirit as that in which the Scheme itself was conceived, a new channel for the expression and even education of public opinion may be supplied by the Councils and in that case, the threatened disintegration of the Congress movement, though disastrous in itself, may prove less disastrous in practice than is at present feared. The concessions to the Mahomedans—and the manner in which they have been obtained by them—have already cooled the enthusiasm of many for the Scheme.'[83]

It would be difficult to improve upon Gokhale's informed and critical appraisal of the situation in India in late 1909—both within the Congress and outside it. But if Gokhale's hopes were dupes, his fears also turned out in many cases to be liars. For reasons which have not been precisely known even to this day,[84] Mehta resigned his nomination to the presidency of the 1909 Congress about a fortnight before it was scheduled to meet; the Bengal Moderates were not required to carry out their threat of secession; the A.I.C.C. acted promptly and found in M.M. Malaviya a not unworthy substitute for Mehta; and the Congress duly assembled at Lahore on 27 December 1909.

The attendance was very poor. Only 243 were present as delegates, and of these seventy-six came from Panjab alone.[85] As chairman of the reception committee, H.K. Lal accorded them 'a welcome from a heart, which has been anxious and uneasy for the last 12 months, and if I may be allowed to use the language of metaphor, I shall say from the Captain, as it were, of a leaking, burning and sinking ship, but from the Captain of a crew, small though in number, but staunch, faithful and dutiful.'[86] Obviously emboldened by the absence of Mehta and wiser from his experience of the recent past, he appealed for unity: 'Let us try to conciliate all wings of the party, and regain our pristine position. Let us have a creed by all means; but an affirmation, a solemn affirmation if you please, of loyalty to the British Crown is all that is required as the creed of the Congress; because so long as we are loyal to the person of the ruler, and to the laws enacted by a legally constituted authority, we may well claim equal rights with the other British subjects. Our ideals should not be mixed up with the creed. They should be clearly stated, firmly agitated for, and should be within the range of practical politics. As to the Constitution, well, the present rules are not sufficient and explicit. They should be put in a better shape, as soon as possible. They had nearly landed us in shallow waters this month, had it not been for the firmness shown by the Reception Committee.[87] If open, frank, real and

sincere loyalty to the existing order of things, a loyalty based on the highest considerations of self-interest, be our creed, we need not discuss any United Congress: as about this simple creed there can be no two and different opinions.'[88]

Probably for the first time from the Congress platform a prominent Moderate leader had had the courage to advocate publicly a suitable revision of the existing Congress constitution with a view, among other things, to achieving unity and strength. The lesson of the recent past was also not lost on others. Gokhale wrote to Wedderburn on 30 June 1910: 'The Congress at Lahore was the poorest gathering on record. Bengal has all but seceded. The bulk of the Punjab was not only indifferent, but actively hostile. The attendance from other Provinces too was unsatisfactory. There were two main causes of this. One was the opposition to the Congress Constitution framed at Allahabad on the part of many, who in their views and convictions are more with us than with the Extremists, but who think that the Constitution stands in the way of a reunion on the Congress platform of all the parties in the country. The other was the feeling that has no doubt been rapidly spreading in the Hindu community since last year that the Congress has done no good to it, that while it bore the brunt of the struggle all these years, the Mahomedans have walked away with the greater part of the spoils, and that it was necessary for the Hindus now, first and foremost, to look after their own interests, as distinguished from those of the Mahomedans.'[89]

Gokhale feared that both the above-mentioned causes would continue to work in 1910 as they had done in the previous year. In order to counter them Gokhale proposed to Wedderburn that he should come over to India and preside over the next Congress, to be held at Allahabad. 'What is most needed', he said, 'is a centre, such as your presence will supply, round which the old Congress elements of the country may re-gather with the old faith revived and strengthened.'[90] As B.R. Nanda rightly observes: 'That a septuagenarian Scotsman, a former member of the I.C.S., should have been called upon to play the role of a saviour of the Indian National Congress in 1910 may seem odd today, but the honour was well deserved. Wedderburn's devotion to the cause of India was total; he had grudged it neither time nor money.'[91]

Before his departure from England Wedderburn let it be known publicly that 'my object in going to India is to take part, however small it may be, in this healing work of conciliation ... between European officials and educated Indian opinion; ... between Hindus and Mahomedans; and ... between Moderate reformers and extremists'.[92] Taking advantage of his visit to India many Extremists wrote to him—both individually and in groups—to bring about a *rapprochement* between the two sections of Indian nationalists and suggesting ways and means of doing it.[93] For example, more than fifty Extremists from western and central India, including N.C. Kelkar and G.V. Joshi, appealed to Wedderburn to unite the Congress by persuading the Moderate leaders to yield on two points: first, by not insisting on every individual delegate to the Congress subscribing to the so-called 'creed' in writing; and second, by allowing public meetings to elect delegates to the Congress as in the pre-Surat days.[94]

At the 1909 Congress at Lahore some Bengal delegates had tried to raise in the subjects committee the question of amending the Congress constitution with a view to facilitating the re-entry of the Extremists in the organisation, but they were persuaded to postpone the matter for a year.[95] In August 1910 the Bengal provincial Congress committee circulated precise amendments to the Congress constitution which it wanted to be discussed at the forthcoming session. The more important of these were (i) that every delegate to the Congress should be

deemed to have accepted, instead of being required to accept in writing, the 'creed' of the Congress; (ii) that public bodies and associations of more than two years' standing, which were recognized by the A.I.C.C., should be allowed to elect delegates to the Congress; (iii) that the delegate fee should be reduced from Rs 20 to Rs 15; and (iv) that the general secretaries of the Congress should be elected for two years from each province by rotation.[96] These amendments had been generally welcomed by the Extremist press,[97] though many Moderate papers were critical of them.[98]

Speaking as president of the Allahabad Congress on 26 December 1910, Wedderburn appealed to the Moderate leaders to consider if they could not, without sacrificing their principles, make it in some way easier for their old colleagues, whose attachment to the Congress ideals was intact but who were dissatisfied with the constitution adopted after the Surat split, to return to the fold.[99] Gokhale, who acted as private secretary to Wedderburn while he was in India in late 1910 and early 1911 and who was required to deal with the large number of representations which were addressed to Wedderburn from the Extremists urging on him the desirability of bringing about unity among Congressmen, was himself convinced that a large number of Extremists were willing to rejoin the Congress provided they could do so while preserving their dignity and self-respect, and that they were not entirely unjustified in demanding that the old practice of allowing public meetings to elect delegates to the Congress should be revived.[100] But, though the matter was privately discussed at Allahabad in late December 1910, no definite proposals could be decided upon for that session, mainly due to the opposition of S.N. Banerjea and B.N. Basu.[101] A committee was, however, appointed to look into the matter more closely and report at the next session of the Congress in December 1911.[102]

By the time the Congress met at Calcutta in December 1911 the confusion and chaos in the Moderate camp had grown enormously. The Moderate Congress organization was in virtual disarray. The All-India Congress Committee did practically nothing throughout the year. The provincial Congress committees led a lifeless existence. District Congress committees did not exist in many parts of the country. Even where they had been established recently—as, for example, in the U.P., mainly through the exertions of the members of Gokhale's Servants of India Society, they collapsed soon after their establishment. The complaint was general that the apathy and indifference of the public towards the Congress had increased. The Moderates had no recognized leader. Mehta's imperious immobility, which used to strain the loyalty of even his most devoted admirers,[103] had only grown with age. Gokhale, though a selfless patriot, earnest worker and able debater, was not really meant for the rough and tumble of a nationalist movement. He felt more at home in the governor-general's legislative council or the National Liberal Club than in an Indian crowd. Moreover, he was in extremely bad health and had too many irons in the fire. S.N. Banerjea was more of an orator than a leader and of late his popularity had visibly declined. There was hardly anybody else among the Moderates who could claim or aspire to a national following. The lack of all-India leaders was particularly marked when the time came at the end of each year to elect a president for the Congress session. This was another reason why the choice of the Congress president became increasingly a controversial affair. In 1911, for example, Bengal Congressmen wanted M.K. Gandhi or Henry Cotton to preside over the forthcoming Calcutta session. The Bombay Moderates wanted Bengal to accept either R.N. Mudholkar or D.A. Khare. In the end, they succeeded in imposing B.N. Dar on the province. This made the Bengal Moderate leaders 'very sore' and they even threatened 'not to hold the Congress at all'.[104]

Not unexpectedly, the Moderate leaders were divided over the question of amending the Congress constitution with a view to facilitating the re-entry of the Extremists. For example, the two general secretaries, D.E. Wacha and D.A. Khare, were opposed to the change.[105] Gokhale favoured it and he had succeeded in converting Malaviya to his point of view.[106] The *Gujarati,* echoing the views of Mehta and his friends, was against the proposed amendments.[107] But the *Leader,* which only a year before had been hostile,[108] was now inclined to favour the relaxation.[109] It was generally believed that Calcutta would be the best place to try and bring about a reunion in the Congress[110] and there was a great deal of eager expectation in many quarters—both Extremist and Moderate—that the happy consummation would be brought about at the forthcoming session of the Congress there in December 1911. But the hopes were dashed. When the question came up for discussion in the subjects committee of the Calcutta Congress it received overwhelming support, including that of Gokhale, Malaviya and S.N. Banerjea, but B.N. Basu, D.E. Wacha and a few others opposed it so vehemently that it was feared that it might cause another schism in the Congress. The relevant resolution—proposing that public meetings be allowed, with due safeguards, to elect delegates to the Congress—though carried in the subjects committee was, therefore, not discussed at all in the open session of the Calcutta Congress.[111]

Commenting on the 1911 Congress at Calcutta, the *Leader* of Allahabad, a prominent and avowed Moderate organ, wrote on 5 January 1912: 'Was the last Congress a success? Was it as much of a success as many of the preceding sessions were? We speak the truth and we answer the question in the negative. ... the number of delegates was less than 500 including those from Bengal itself. Never after 1886, when the first great Congress was held in Calcutta, was the number of delegates at a Calcutta session so small as this. Bombay, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, and Bengal itself were poorly represented. Most of the leading men of Bombay were conspicuous by their absence, while many old Congressmen of Bengal did not care to enter its portals. Nor can all of these be stigmatised as extremists, for they still believe in the programme of the Congress. It will be idle to deny that careful attention was not bestowed on the drafting of the resolutions. ... The level of speaking was low ... It had been apparent for some time before the last Congress met that the new Constitution stood in need of considerable modification and in the direction of a relaxation of the restrictive rules framed in 1908 under circumstances which are not the same today. Modification was required for two chief reasons. In the first place, there was dissatisfaction in the country at many of the provisions of the Constitution. It was probably necessary in 1908 rather to err on the side of caution than to make concessions to popular demands in many respects, but the situation has changed immensely for the better as leading Congressmen themselves are never tired of reminding the Government. There is no longer an extremist party, though there are individuals here and there who remain by lesson untaught. It was not beyond the range of possibility for such a modification to have been made in the Congress regulations as to have satisfied the bulk of old Congressmen while at the same time individuals who did not believe in the basic principles of the Congress were kept out. The procedure adopted and the temper in which suggestions to this effect were discussed by a section of influential Congressmen rendered futile the efforts of those who were anxious to bring about the needed improvement in this direction. In the second place, it was clear to all who cared to acquaint themselves with facts that the articles of the Constitution were not being conformed to almost anywhere in the country. We are prepared to make a confident assertion to this effect. What then was the meaning of refusal to allow amendments

which would have had the double effect of conciliating a large body of Congressmen who, for certain reasons, felt themselves unable to join an organisation in which they believed, and to substitute reality for make-believe so far as the observation of the Constitution itself went? While the last Congress dispersed without remedying the grave defect we have pointed out above, it was content to leave things in the highly unsatisfactory position in which they had been, so far as real, earnest and sustained work in the country was concerned. Paradoxical as the observation may sound, we fancy, it rather requires a certain amount of effort on the part of Congress committees and secretaries to do less than what they have been doing. The Indian National Congress is, perhaps, about the only organisation of its magnitude in the whole civilised world which presents the sad and curious spectacle of being without a fund, without an office, without any whole-time office-bearers after 26 years of existence. ... It is our abiding conviction that the future of India requires the continued existence of the Indian National Congress with unabated popular enthusiasm behind it. We feel, therefore, the more sorry to miss in the more recent sessions of the Congress the old life and animation which thrilled people's hearts, which lifted them above themselves, [and] which made patriots of men. The Congress cannot afford to have large sections of the people against it for any length of time. It is for the people, must be of the people and can only live by the support of the people. We sincerely trust that full advantage will be taken of the wise resolution of the last session to commit again to the All-India Congress Committee the task of revising the Constitution in whatever respect such revision may be called for, and we hope that when the Congress will meet in December next at Bankipore it may be under conditions more favourable to its future prosperity than can be said to be the case at the present moment.'[112]

The year 1912 witnessed a further decline in Congress activity and morale in India. The *Leader* wrote on 28 March 1912: 'Recently the columns of some of our contemporaries in Bombay, Madras and the Punjab were filled with lamentations and heart-searchings about the low state of public activity in those provinces. What of capable leaders as well as loyal followers, the absence of anything like organisation, the lack of a true disinterestedness, the unpreparedness for sacrifice, the indifference and indolence which lead people to prefer ill-informed or uninformed declamation to informed criticism; these and other defects were enlarged upon besides stress being laid on the petty bickerings and jealousies and even cantankerousness so unhappily prevalent in our midst. ... The greatest of our national organisations is the Indian National Congress. It is not in a very robust state as anybody who was present at its more recent sessions could testify. It has never completely recovered from the violent shock it received at Surat. ... The provincial political conferences are only in a slightly better condition. It has always been noticed in Madras and the United Provinces that the attendance at these conferences is comparatively meagre. Bombay, the Punjab and the Central Provinces have even ceased to hold their conferences. ... Then let us turn to our public bodies. The most important of these is unquestionably the Bombay Presidency Association. What is its record in recent years? Where are its annual reports? How many times in the year does it meet? What interest do its members take in it? The case of the Indian Association of Calcutta is easily worse. And yet Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Mr. Dinshaw Wacha are the principal office-bearers of the Presidency Association, while Babu Surendranath Banerjea is the honorary secretary of the Indian Association. The Mahajana Sabha of Madras, the Deccan Sabha of Poona and the Indian Association of Lahore are no better, while the United Provinces Association going one better simply abolished itself. Provincial Congress Committees, district associations and

Congress Committees, and industrial associations and committees are if anything a shade worse. About the only social reform association that does any work, and not much of that, is the Bombay Presidency Social Reform Association. ... In the lowest depth there is a deeper still. If the state of public life in the whole country is unsatisfactory in the extreme, what is one to say of the "public life" of these our provinces? Paralysis has overtaken it. Our only public men in the real sense of the term are Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Babu Ganga Prasad Varma. ... The dead-and-alive existence led by the United Provinces Congress Committee, the United Provinces Industrial Association, the United Provinces Hindu Sabha, the United Provinces Temperance Council, the Lucknow People's Association and the Oudh Industrial Association, only exemplify the unreality there is about all such bodies in the districts. And yet such men as the Hon. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Dr. Satish Chandra Banerji, the Hon. Babu Ganga Prasad Varma, the Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and the Hon. Raja Rampal Singh are the presidents of these bodies, while such men as Babu Iswar Saran and Rai Braj Narayan Gurtu, Babu Prushottam Das Tandon, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru and Pandit Gokaran Nath Misra, Dr. M.C. Tandon and Babu Parameswar Dayal, Pandit Iqbal Narayan Masaldan and Mr. A.P. Sen are the secretaries. Are there wiser leaders and more enthusiastic workers among us? Things have come to such a melancholy pass at Allahabad, the intellectual centre of the provinces, that it has become impossible and hopeless even to attempt to do anything.'[113]

Writing on the same subject, a contributor to the same paper remarked on 11 May 1912: 'How is it that a languid indifference prevails all over the country, while not even a little of what should be done has yet been taken in hand? Listlessness and supineness, exhaustion after the stress and strain of the last six years, a tendency to sit with folded hands and to let things go their own blessed way, loss of faith and loss of courage; these mark the change in circumstances. Social reform no longer moves the soul of even a mighty few, to whom the sight of social evils eating into the very vitals of society ought to give no peace day or night. ... Repression and the cold realities of the Morley-Minto reforms have quenched the fire and enthusiasm of those whose political fervour was in inverse proportion to their insight in the reality of the situation and in whose case it is certainly folly to be wise where ignorance is bliss, because in ignorance they allow their credulity to be traded upon by the siren-songs of the weathercock politicians who sing to the tune that pays most. The official attitude of special favour towards the ultra-loyalists to whom the smiles and frowns of the powers that be mean ever so much, has contributed to a large extent towards the demoralisation of many a public man. This backsliding on the part of those who had the courage of their convictions and whose honour was bright till yesterday, is noticeable in all—from the imperial councillor downwards to a humble worker in the "Locil-Slough". Unworthy calculations of how their opinions would affect the officials determine the exact degree to which the dilution of their opinion is to be carried on. This barter of their birthright for something even less than the proverbial mess of pottage is carried on under the cover of necessity for co-operation between the officials and the non-officials. The rage for giving farewell parties to every humpty-dumpty little tin-god, who has done nothing for the people and whose sole qualification for an honour of this kind seems to lie in his lack of every positive virtue, is a most damaging fact that bears witness to the changed circumstances. ... We have thus been brought to a state of things when public life in India may be said to have touched the bottom. Old workers are falling off; and the few that happily remain with us are either too old to do much active service or find themselves out of all sympathy with the altered circumstances. And the younger generation is content to live on the

spoils gathered by their predecessors, indulging now and then in vapoury oratory because it has been always done like that, rather than because they feel the need for it. The speech-making over, they return to their homes and to money-making and kow-towing before their gilded idols for the rest of the year. They have no energy; they feel no quickening of the soul; they have not been touched by the glory of the vision; they are content to live and to die, rather than to labour and to suffer for something higher, something better than their own petty selfish ends. The spirit has flown, the husk remains; and we are carrying on the tradition of our public life moved by the impulse of inertia. The nadir has been reached, and our consolation lies in the hope that after all things cannot hereafter grow worse. ... Washing the dirty linen before the public eye may not be quite desirable; but there are men who would never wash their dirty linen unless public attention is drawn to the dirt they are wearing. Down with shame. Let us be inspired by a truer earnestness of purpose than seems at present to inspire a good many so-called patriots. Let our allegiance to principles be not merely intellectual; it should be more. ... We should no longer suffer evil for want of strength to strike it down. "Live and let live" is a suicidal policy; and the virtue of tolerance should not be allowed to degenerate into a passive acquiescence in wrong, when mighty issues are at stake. And there are moments when sweet compliments should no longer be bandied, and when the truth must be told, be it ever so unpleasant.'[114]

Too many Moderates were just then busy washing their dirty linen in public and adding to 'the Congress confusion'.[115] In the autumn of 1912 an acrimonious and unseemly controversy developed between the general secretaries of the Congress and the reception committee of the Bankipur Congress. The latter refused to accept R.N. Mudholkar as president of the forthcoming Congress, though his name was recommended by a majority of the provincial Congress committees in the country, and instead insisted on having Gokhale. Following the example of Bengal in 1911, the Bihar reception committee wanted the question to be referred to the A.I.C.C. for a final decision. This earned for them the rebuke of the general secretaries of the Congress in a language which the Bihar reception committee described as 'wholly unwarranted and unjustifiable'.[116] The *Beharee* called Wacha 'the Bombay Dictator',[117] and a correspondent to the same paper remarked that Wacha and Khare 'seem to have entirely lost their balance of judgement and they do not realise the exact magnitude of their procedure and arbitrary action. The sooner they vacate their responsible offices, the better for the future of the Congress and the country.'[118] Gokhale himself was unwilling to become president of the Bankipur Congress, because, among other things, Mudholkar was the choice of the Bombay Moderates and he himself was in very poor health and extremely busy otherwise. Bihar was not Bengal. The Bankipur reception committee was beaten into submission by the direction of the Congress high command and the weight of Moderate public opinion elsewhere in the country into accepting Mudholkar as president, but the incident did further damage to the prestige and popularity of Moderate leaders in the country.

Full details are not available of the discussion that took place in the meeting of the subjects committee at the Calcutta Congress in December 1911 on the question of amending the constitution with a view, among other things, to allowing public meetings to elect delegates to the Congress. But such fragmentary evidence as I have been able to gather suggests that those who favoured the amendment wanted to make a virtue of necessity and to kill several birds with one stone. They knew that the Congress constitution was being followed more in the breach than in the observance and that the Congress organization was very imperfect. They believed that by allowing public meetings to elect delegates to the Congress, they would not

only be satisfying the grievance felt by a large number of old Congressmen, but also be increasing its popularity. Those who opposed the amendment, however, feared (i) that it would undermine the authority of the Congress committees; (ii) that it would result in Congress sessions being swamped by undesirable elements and a possible repetition of the Surat episode; and (iii) that it would be the thin end of the wedge for an Extremist take-over of the organization.

Under the leadership of M.M. Malaviya and G.P. Varma, the United Provinces Congress Committee suggested 'a compromise amendment' which recommended that only such public meetings as were convened by Congress committees should be allowed to elect delegates to the Congress. Pleading for the adoption of this compromise amendment by the A.I.C.C., which was scheduled to meet at Bankipur on 25 December 1912, the *Leader* wrote on 22 December 1912: 'It is no secret that last year in Calcutta several prominent Congressmen expressed the view that the right [of electing delegates to the Congress] should be restored to public meetings. When the Constitution was adopted in 1908, the point of view of excluding persons whose opinions and propaganda were held to have brought trouble on the Congress and the country, prevailed exclusively. In the circumstances then existing the Convention Committee were not to blame for having attached so much weight to this consideration. The situation, however, has changed enormously for the better between 1908 and 1912. There is no longer an extremist party. Individuals there still no doubt may be who belong to that party, but they are stray individuals here and there. There is not at present the same risk as it was believed there was in 1908, that undesirable elements would swamp the Congress and destroy it. ... It may be [said] that unless the privilege of election of delegates was limited to Congress committees and recognised associations, there would be no incentive to the Congressmen in the districts to establish such committees and keep them alive. ... But let us be free from cant and candidly ask whether in spite of the special inducements held out, these committees have been kept up in accordance with the requirements of the constitution. He must be a bold man or an uninformed man who would answer the question in the affirmative. At least we are not aware of any district [Congress] committee throughout India which has conformed to all provisions of the Constitution, nor a single provincial [Congress] committee which has taken steps to see that it will so conform. We are prepared to challenge a contradiction of this statement. If the fact as stated is accepted, it follows that the constitution has really been broken each year since it was passed in 1908; while at the same time a grievance is kept alive that public meetings are not allowed to elect delegates, and an excuse is furnished to people to stay away from the Congress. That it has become necessary in the interests of the Congress to remove the grievance and make every possible endeavour to bring back the lost sheep into the fold, must have become clear from our last article on the Calcutta Congress to which a little more than 80 delegates went from the whole of United Bengal. And, speaking for ourselves, we have no hesitation in saying that the Constitution, as it is, has proved too much for the public spirit and organising capacity of Congressmen everywhere in the country, and that in the letter as well as in the spirit, it has been departed from. Commonsense suggests that what has not been achieved during the last four years, stands little chance of being accomplished in the next half a dozen years, at least for the reason that people will not suddenly become transformed into public-spirited and constitutional beings. We at any rate are unable to derive comfort from a mere contemplation of the beauties of a paper constitution for which in its highly developed and complicated form Congressmen as a body have not shown themselves to be particularly fit. One

more point is that until 1908 there used to be at least one occasion in the year when people could be got together to think of what the Congress is, what it has done, what it hopes to do, and why it is necessary to take interest in it and to work for it. Now that public meetings for the election of delegates have been ruled out, even that opportunity has been lost. The election of delegates has become an absolutely lifeless affair. We are convinced that for these reasons the best service the All-India Congress Committee can do to the Congress would be to restore to public meetings the right to elect delegates. The most radical Congressman being after all a conservative Indian, many Congressmen are not evidently prepared to make the courageous alteration in the Constitution, and probably it is for this reason that the United Provinces Committee have proposed what might be called "a compromise amendment" that only such public meetings as are convened by Congress committees should be allowed to elect delegates. We shall be glad if even this amendment is accepted by the All-India Congress Committee.'[119]

Meeting in the relatively backward province of Bihar—a province noted, as the Bombay *Indu Prakash* put it, for 'the predominance of what may be called the ultra-moderate school of Congress politicians'[120]— the 1912 Congress did adopt the 'compromise amendment' proposed by the United Provinces Congress Committee[121] and strongly recommended by the *Leader*. But the amendment did not make the kind of concession which the Extremists had been demanding and therefore totally failed to satisfy them. The Extremists wanted that public meetings convened under the auspices of any association should be allowed to elect delegates to the Congress—this would have obviated the necessity of Extremist associations first seeking recognition at the hands of the Moderate-dominated Congress committees. What the amendment adopted at Bankipur did was only to allow Congress committees and other associations recognized by the Congress committees to convene public meetings in order to elect delegates to the Congress. This did not allow the Extremists to go to the Congress through their own electorates and also hurt their sense of self-respect in being required to get their associations recognized by Congress committees, which were dominated by their adversaries. They regarded the concession of 1912 as being no concession at all and continued to stay away from the Congress.

Noticing the meagre attendance at the Bankipur Congress, the *Hindu* wrote on 2 January 1913: 'It is a matter of common knowledge that the Congress as it is now worked, has fallen perceptibly from the high pedestal which not long ago it used to occupy in the minds of the educated public. This is in no small degree due to the constitution and the creed which was [*sic*] framed for it in the teeth of the opposition which was offered to it by a large body of its supporters. ... Great hopes were cherished that at the Calcutta Congress in 1911 some tangible reform would be effected but at the last moment the coterie of reactionaries among the adherents of the Congress are said to have carried the day. In its present form the Congress is a truncated institution and the want of enthusiasm which is visible all over the country regarding it shows that it needs a readaptation and readjustment to the changed conditions and to the growing [forces] of the times, to make it a national agency.'[122]

'The Bankipur Conventionist Congress', wrote the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 30 December 1912, 'is over. It ought to be an object-lesson to those Conventionists who are opposed to a United Congress. Successive failures of the recent Congresses since the unfortunate Surat incident are convincing proofs of the fact that except some "mamuli" Congressmen who are bound to keep up the show, the nation is losing all confidence in it. The Conventionists devised various means to attract a large number of delegates to their present session. Elaborate

arrangements were made for the accommodation of at least 500 delegates but more than half the seats remained unoccupied, there being a little above 200 delegates present. The meagre attendance of the delegates was so striking that the President could not but notice it and on the last date of the Congress he expressed his regret that in spite of tempting accommodation furnished by the Reception Committee and the central position of Bankipur, there were less than 400 people present including members of the Reception Committee and the local delegates. The reason for this poor attendance was known to all, including those on whom the destinies of the Congress fortunately or unfortunately lay. Some of them who are less conservative thought that this state of things ought to be either mended or ended. They met privately and informally and a suggestion was made that the door of the Congress should be opened for the non-Conventionists by doing away with the creed condition altogether. This led to a meeting of the A.I.C.C., of course with closed doors. What discussion took place is not known to the public, but the conclusions were: (1) to reduce the delegation fee from Rs. 20 to Rs. 10; (2) to admit as delegates all those who will be elected at public meetings called by recognised associations and public bodies. These, they consider, will induce many to join the Congress. How far these changes will bring about the desired result time will show. So long as the sting is there it is doubtful whether these strategical movements will be acceptable to the non-Conventionists.'[123]

The Morley-Minto reforms—both by extending the system of representative government in the country and also by the manner of doing it—brought India not peace but the sword. Far more than the extension of local self-government under Ripon in the early 1880s or the liberalization of the legislative councils under Lansdowne in the early 1890s, the Morley-Minto reforms in the first decade of the twentieth century heightened the tensions latent in Indian society, particularly between officials and non-officials, between Hindus and Muslims, and between the professional classes and the landed gentry. It may be recalled that Wedderburn had visited India in late 1910 with the mission of pacifying the country. Aided by his efforts the Congress, which had already expelled its Extremists and was now firmly controlled by the Moderates, was able to win the regard and recognition of many Anglo-Indian officials. The Muslims, having stolen a great march over the Hindus and having obtained even their most extravagant demands, were also inclined to be friendly with the Hindus, the more so because they were anxious to pressurize the British government into modifying its recent anti-Turk policies. A good deal of secret and open confabulations took place from 1910 onwards between the leaders of the two communities with a view to bringing about an *entente cordiale* between Hindus and Muslims and between the Congress and the Muslim League. A leading Muslim from Madras, Nawab Syed Mahomed Bahadur, who was also a member of the Muslim League, was chosen to preside over the Karachi session of the Congress in 1913. He and some other Muslim Congressmen, like Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Mazhar-ul-Haq, persuaded the Congress at Karachi to make a gesture of friendship towards the Muslim League by dropping its resolution opposing the grant of separate electorates to the Muslims for the legislative councils, which it had been regularly passing since 1909. In return, they promised that they would be able to persuade the Muslim League to give up its demand for the extension of the system of separate electorates to the local bodies.[124]

While the Moderate leaders of the Congress were thus embarked on a campaign of promoting peace and good will all round, they could hardly resist for long the demand for reunion with their old colleagues who stayed away from the Congress allegedly because of

their very minor objections to the Congress constitution. The popularity of the Moderates and of the Congress which they controlled had been steadily on the decline since 1908—and the Karachi session had provided the latest proof of it. If for no other reason than to put themselves in the right with the Indian public and in order to improve their bargaining position with the government and other political groups in the country, the Moderate leaders of the Congress needed to respond more favourably than they had hitherto done to the growing demand for a *rapprochement* between the two wings of the national movement.

Taking advantage of the situation, the Extremists increased their pressure for reunion among Congressmen in early 1914—even before Tilak was released (17 June) or the First World War broke out (4 August). Under the leadership of R.P. Karandikar, who had maintained his links with the Moderate leaders even after the Surat split, the Maharashtrian Extremists took a bold initiative and decided to convene a provincial conference at Satara on 26 April 1914. It was hoped that the conference would be attended by both the Moderates and the Extremists. As a concession to Moderate sentiment, the circular issued by the conveners on 6 March 1914 made it clear that only those persons 'who accept the attainment by constitutional means of Self-Government within the Empire, as laid down by Article I of the Congress Constitution' would be eligible as delegates, or as electors of delegates, to the forthcoming conference; but as a sop to the Extremists it was declared that 'the intending delegates need not express in writing their acceptance of this object'.[125] The Bombay Presidency Association and the Poona Deccan Sabha, both of which were dominated by the Moderates, disowned and boycotted the conference, saying that it was in violation of the Congress constitution, but it was nonetheless held and largely attended. G.K. Chitale, a prominent Maharashtrian Moderate, moved the most important resolution at the conference, which proposed the appointment of a committee 'to try to bring about reconciliation between the two Congress parties on the following lines: The Congress shall be open to every person elected as a delegate to it at any public meeting or by any public association in the British Empire, *provided* the delegate accepts in writing Article I of the present Constitution of the Indian National Congress Organisation.'[126]

The proposal of the Satara conference was, of course, welcomed in the Extremist press, but in the Moderate press it had a mixed reception. The *Gujarati,* for example, ridiculed it and expressed 'grave doubts if such an extraordinary concession will ever be granted by the Congress'.[127] It was, however, favourably received by the *Leader,* the *Advocate,* the *Panjabee,* the *Tribune,* the *Bengalee,* and the *Dnyan Prakash.* The *Leader* wrote on 30 April 1914 that 'it would be nothing short of folly for this offer to be rejected light-heartedly'. The paper pointed out how the Bankipur Congress had already in 1912 liberalized the constitution to the extent that the election of delegates might be made at public meetings which were convened by Congress committees and other recognized associations, and added: 'We feel certain that there will be absolutely no harm if one more step forward be taken and the right conceded to all public meetings, as long as ... the requirement about every individual delegate's subscription to the first article, is there.'[128] In another editorial on the same subject, the *Leader,* 20 May 1914, averred that its views were shared by such leading Moderate politicians as Gokhale, Malaviya, Banerjea, Vijiaraghavachariar, and Lajpat Rai. Referring to the comment of the *Gujarati* that the Satara proposal 'can scarcely be incorporated into its own constitution by the Congress without making itself ridiculous in the eyes of every sensible and far-seeing Congressman', the *Leader* wrote: 'We do not know. But if the fact be as it is stated here with such assurance, we should feel far easier at heart and in mind to see the Congress ridiculed by "sensible and far-

seeing", but also unbending, unyielding, unlearning, unforgetting, unforgiving critics than to see it dwindle year by year and ultimately come to an inevitable collapse. And we should cheerfully and proudly be in that ridiculous assemblage with its venerated leaders, Messrs. Gokhale and Malaviya and Banerjea, than be out of it because of an alteration in the constitution dictated by necessity and experience and its own best interests.' The paper predicted that 'the further change' in the Congress constitution on the lines proposed by the Satara conference probably 'will be made—it certainly will be pressed—at Madras this year'.[129]

The political situation in India, particularly in relation to the Congress, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, was thus ably analysed by an Indian politician writing anonymously in the *Times of India* of 24 April 1914: 'It is a great pity that after nearly a generation of the activities of the Indian National Congress, political life in this country, from the people's point of view should be so little organised. ... If the Congress is not rendered superfluous by the enlarged councils, can it be said that the same enthusiasm is displayed by the people in that movement as used to be the case a few years ago? Indian newspapers have themselves been harping upon the apathy of the educated classes with regard to the political movement. The South African struggle did indeed evoke considerable political enthusiasm and activity, but what about organised political work that has to be carried on incessantly in the town and the district? Some such work was done a few years back but it is now conspicuous by its absence. ... The faith which is the soul of real, solid though unpretentious work is wanting and that accounts for much of the present apathy. After the Surat affair ... Indian politicians were split into two divisions. ... The reactionaries, thanks to the timely action of Government, have learnt a much needed lesson, and the distinguishing political doctrines which they exultantly displayed to public view are no longer professed. With chastened mood they are anxious to go back to the Congress fold. They would have organised a Congress of their own had they thought it feasible. But they have no distinct programme of their own and this duplication of the machinery, they have the good sense to see, would not serve any useful purpose. They have their differences with the other party but they are not about fundamental principles. The National Congress is no longer the "convention congress" as distinguished from the "people's congress". But, so far, those in possession have refused to admit the erring members to the Congress fold unless they are willing to enter unconditionally. An unconditional surrender the excluded politicians are unable to stomach and there is a considerable body of opinion among Congressmen in favour of concession to their repentant brothers. It is clear to every unbiased observer that without them the Congress is weak in numbers as well as in enthusiasm. It is no use disguising the fact that excepting a few towering personalities the leaders of the Congress as it is at present constituted are not "popular" and have no following among the masses. However deluded the people may be—and there can be no doubt about the delusion—the fact is there that the Congress is no longer the people's organisation it used to be before. Leading spirits in the Congress are not unconscious of this, but they do not want to see the Allahabad constitution modified lest such a modification may open the doors wide to undesirable people and give a loophole for mischief. Surat is yet unforgettable and the memory of 1907 stands in the way of once more welding together the two sections. In the meantime, some of those who stood aloof from the Convention Congress have made their peace and joined the old organisation. Others have been waiting for things to take a favourable turn. In certain provinces, while keeping aloof from the central body, politicians

have been taking part in provincial conferences which are not held in accordance with the Congress constitution. In our own Presidency no such conference has been held for several years ... . Those who hold the political strings are too old or indifferent to organise a provincial conference and they have not even the time to attend the sessions of the National Congress. The younger members have not the ardour and the living faith which are required for the undertaking and the Social Conference which used to follow in the footsteps of the elder sister has now found it necessary to make its own arrangements. ... The good people of Satara are this month holding a provincial conference, but it is clearly in violation of the Congress constitution. This is right so far as it goes ... But the pertinent question may be asked, if the Satara people have no right to hold a conference, what have those who have it been doing all these years? They hug to their bosom the constitution of the Congress and feel that their responsibility ends there. Have not these guardians a duty to perform to themselves and to the people beyond sending an occasional telegram and submitting a stray memorial? The people are not certainly trained in this way to a political life. We have, at present, nothing better than a paper constitution, and nobody cares to inquire what the district committees are doing or whether they exist at all. Really speaking, these committees are a farce and absolutely no work is being done in the districts ... nothing but apathy meets the eye all around. ... It is a plain fact that few among the educated classes are in intimate touch with the masses and political life as such is conspicuous by its absence.'[130]

The Satara conference gave an enormous tactical advantage to the Extremists. They had once again advertised not only their keen desire for reunion, but also their apparent moderation and reasonableness. They had clearly laid down their terms for compromise with the Moderates and rallied their ranks behind them. They had gained a great deal of public sympathy and support for their stance. They had even converted some of their opponents—the most notable being Mrs Annie Besant. By placing the onus of accepting or rejecting their offer on the Moderates, they had succeeded in dividing the latter and heightening their predicament. The Moderates could not continue swimming against the tide of public opinion for long. Some of their leaders, notably Gokhale, Malaviya and Banerjea, realized the advantages of making a compromise with the Extremists both in order to put themselves in the right with the Indian public and to infuse new life into the Congress movement and organization. But there were other Moderate leaders, such as Mehta and Wacha, who were totally opposed to a compromise with the Extremists for the simple reason that they feared that it would result in the capture of the Congress by the latter and its transformation into something very different from that which they had known all these years.

The release of Tilak from jail in mid-June 1914, his unexpectedly conciliatory, loyal and moderate attitude towards current issues, and the general atmosphere created by the war, all served to increase the chances of reunion among Congressmen. The cause of reunion had already gained a very influential supporter in Mrs Annie Besant, who had taken a sudden but a very deep plunge into Indian politics earlier in the year. While the Extremists received fresh reinforcements as the months passed by, the Moderates became further divided and demoralized. In the second half of 1914 the Moderates became involved in a prolonged and unseemly controversy over the choice of the president for the next Congress scheduled to be held at Madras. The manner in which the ruling Moderate clique, headed by Mehta, tried and succeeded in getting B.N. Basu elected president of the 1914 Congress in preference to Lajpat Rai, though the latter was clearly the choice at the first ballot of a majority of the provincial

Congress committees, with whom the decision rested, and, of course, of an overwhelming majority of Congressmen all over the country, allegedly because it was feared that Lajpat Rai's election would give offence to the British and the Muslims, created new dissensions among the Moderates and further tarnished their image. The bitterness which was generated in the hearts of many loyal Moderates by the tactics through which Basu was pitchforked into the presidential chair was given expression to by the *Leader* when it wrote on 16 October 1914: 'Now that it is clear that Lala Lajpat Rai will not preside over the Congress—not because he has not got the regular majority vote but because of the reasons that clearly emerge from the whole tortuous proceeding—we may say that there are many who will understand that Congressmen are expected to cultivate the friendship of Simla and Aligarh—and more of Aligarh than of Simla—before they can be regarded as worthy of esteem and confidence in Congress circles. The hint has come a trifle too late, for otherwise Lala Lajpat Rai's fellow-sinners, the Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and the Hon. Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar could equally have been kept out or would have kept themselves out of the Congress chair, for which, according to the latest edition of "Qualifications for the Congress Presidency", they were and are as unfit as Lala Lajpat Rai was and is. The process began at Bankipur when frantic efforts were made to prevent a harmless and sensible amendment being moved to the resolution on Councils regulations, and rapidly, energetically and considerably developed at Karachi under Nawab Syed Mahomed's Presidentship with the active collaboration of Messrs. Wacha and Jinnah and Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu himself, now finds its culmination at Madras. But one final and decisive step remains to be taken through the good offices of mutual friends—one of whom absented himself from the Lahore Congress on the avowed ground that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was the President, and has this year taken an active part in leading at least one provincial committee to give a vote against Lala Lajpat Rai's election—the Indian National Congress (for its own sake) should seek to affiliate itself as a branch of the All-India Moslem League. That will be the fitting consummation.'[131]

Almost immediately after the selection of the president for the coming Madras Congress had been finally made in October 1914, Mrs Besant initiated a nation-wide discussion on the future of the Congress and its programme of work through the columns of her paper *New India.* In an article entitled 'The Voice of India', she traced the history of the Congress and the work it had already done, suggested some 'definite functions for the Congress to discharge' in the future, and invited public men all over the country to discuss them thoroughly before they could be taken up at the next Congress. She offered to publish contributions to the discussion in her own paper, *New India,* and arranged for their simultaneous publication in the *Leader* of Allahabad. Referring to the Surat split and its aftermath, she said: 'All the world knows of the internal divisions which arose in the Congress during the stormy years of unrest, and it boots not to recall them. Enough to say that the divisions struck a blow at the full representation of Indian nationalists, the extreme wing withdrawing, and thereafter standing apart. What chiefly concerns us here is the subtler argument that the Congress has become unnecessary since the establishment of the Legislative Councils, and that it has no longer any effective function to discharge in the life of the Nation. If that be so, it had better commit suicide; but is it so? Is not the lesser enthusiasm it arouses due to the fact that, although times have changed, the Congress continues to move on in exactly the same groove, passing year after year similar resolutions, and making little substantial progress? The younger generation is growing impatient, while the Congress marks time. All are ready to honour and show gratitude to those, who, through

hardship and storm, created and sustained the Congress, by which alone India became articulate. If they would lead, the younger men would gladly follow. But a leader must not stand still. ... We say that there are definite functions for the Congress to discharge: (1) To educate public opinion, in order that it may support legislative action in the Councils. (2) To prepare materials for proposed legislation, i.e. to gather the facts on which is to be based the brief from which the counsel shall argue. (3) To formulate and proclaim the opinion of educated India on all urgent matters, and to take the steps necessary for making that opinion effective.'[132]

Many leading Moderates and Extremists, such as S.S. Iyer, G.S. Iyer, H.N. Datta, T.B. Sapru, Motilal Ghose, C.Y. Chintamani, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, and S.K. Altekar, took part in the 'open discussion' to which Mrs Besant invited them and which, she claimed, was 'intended to lead to the recognition of the Congress as an essential factor in the building up of the Nation'.[133]

Some of the contributors to the 'open discussion' confirmed the impression which Mrs Besant had probably already formed on the basis of her own observation and private enquiries, that there was a widespread feeling among politically-conscious Indians that the breach between the Moderates and the Extremists should be healed in the interests of both the Congress and the country. For example N. Subba Rao, one of the two general secretaries of the Congress at the time, wrote: 'There is no doubt that of late the Congress does not evoke the same amount of enthusiasm as it did in its early years and that the Congress organization with its subsidiary committees do not carry on continuous work throughout the year. ... In this connection we cannot ignore the fact that among those who have seceded from the Congress since the Surat split there are some who are willing to work with us and who support the aims and objects of the Congress but who have stood aloof from us. The recent provincial conference at Satara has markedly brought out this attitude of mind among a section of our co-workers. I do not believe there are any acute differences in principle which prevent them from joining the Congress. ... I think it would be well if provincial Congress committees meet the leading men of this section and arrive at a *modus operandi* if possible, for unitedly carrying on the work of the Congress which already suffers from lack of earnest workers.'[134] Writing 'as a citizen', Hirendra Nath Datta remarked: '... in order that the Congress may exercise a potent voice in moulding the future of India, it should be a united and truly representative organisation. The so-called "moderates" and the so-called "extremists"—I prefer to call both of them "nationalists", who have temporarily been separated for no adequate reason—must join hands and uplift the Congress to its true and National position. There are no irreconcilable differences between the two wings; both are content to abide within the Empire, and have set themselves the ideal of self-government on colonial lines. That being so, the difference is really only personal. The delegates who, after the Surat split met in Convention, framed a certain Constitution and formulated certain rules, which they want the whole nation to accept. To say the least, this is not constitutional ... Let the rules and the Constitution of the Congress be suspended for the moment ... Let the portals of the Congress be thrown wide open. Let delegates freely meet as they used to do before the Surat split, and thereafter let the Constitution and the rules be put before the united Congress and either confirmed or modified by that body. Then only can they be binding on the nation. I do not see what practical difficulty there can be in doing this, and I hope the leaders of the Congress, which is going to meet at Madras, will be able to achieve this union of the two parties. If they are successful, the Madras

Congress will have justified itself; otherwise it will continue the same tame and lifeless affair as it has been during the last few years.'[135] Tej Bahadur Sapru, the rising hope of the Moderate party in Allahabad, wrote: 'I think practically everybody is agreed that ... the Congress is no longer the power it used to be at one time. It does not evoke the same warmth of feeling as it used to, say, eight years ago. It does not appeal to popular imagination, in the same manner in which it used to until it was held in Benares in 1905 or in Calcutta in 1906. ... The Indian view is—it is only right to say that this is not universal—that Surat sucked out the life-blood of the Congress. ... there is no doubt that the split caused at Surat has seriously affected the Congress. It would be a barren and thankless task now to discuss the events which led up to the unfortunate scenes that were enacted in Surat. Probably distance of time has given us a better perspective—and certainly there is a disposition in all parts of the country to make up the differences. Ebullition of feeling is neither uncommon nor wholly bad in politics, and certainly what was enacted at Surat in 1907 has been enacted a hundred times in countries from which we have borrowed our political ideas. ... But the part of wisdom is not to perpetuate these differences, more particularly when there is no occasion for them. It would be futile for one party or the other to raise technical objections now. What is wanted is a broad and liberal spirit of reconciliation, forgetful of the past and mindful of the future; a clear recognition on all hands that the Congress is and must be a constitutional body, that its methods must always be constitutional, and that it cannot by word, deed or connivance have anything to do with those who say or do things in an unconstitutional manner. If we approach the whole matter in this spirit, I think the Congress may yet recall to itself many of those who were of it and in it until a few years ago. It should be the business and duty of distinguished leaders in every part of the country, to bring about a reconciliation among their dissentient followers. If only a genuine effort is made, I have no doubt that the results will be highly satisfactory.'[136] C.K. Ramaswami Goundar observed: '... the main cause that is responsible for the lifelessness to which the Congress is reduced of late ... is the split, and the consequent withdrawal of some of the best men, notably Mr. Tilak, who is a man of commanding genius, whose patriotism and suffering have made him the idol of a large section of the Indian people and whose name is always a charm to many. ... The present Congress, by closing the door against such people, has unfortunately bred a feeling that the Congress is a party organisation, and the feeling against it is bitter. It is really fortunate that *New India,* quite in appropriateness with the title it has assumed, should be infusing a new spirit with regard to the Congress, and it would gladden many hearts if a reconciliation should be effected and the Madras Congress should see all the old patriots, who have been standing aloof, as sullen, discontented, or eager spectators for one reason or other.'[137] Motilal Ghose, editor of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* who had been active as a peacemaker for a long time, made what was probably the most earnest and practical proposal for immediate unity in the Congress. Writing in response to Mrs Besant's invitation, he said: 'Either we must have a united Congress or none at all. That is my deliberate opinion, and it is, I believe, shared by ninety-five per cent of our educated men. A house divided against itself must collapse in the end. The first duty of the leaders of Indian opinion, therefore, is to make up the split in the Congress camp. ... Seven long years have passed away since they separated themselves in anger at Surat. What a pity they have not yet been able to make up their differences! This is all the more surprising as they hold exactly the same political views and are equally anxious to serve their countrymen. But enough mischief has already been done. Indeed, the Congress is now not only regarded as a sectional body but is languishing and dragging a

lifeless existence. It is, therefore, high time that they should forget and forgive, and unite themselves on a common platform for the purpose of regenerating their poor mother-country which, in all conscience, is in an extremely bad way.' Ghose argued that with the non-Conventionists agreeing to subscribe to the 'creed' of the Congress, 'the main difficulty in the way of a reconciliation has been removed'. 'The other obstacle is of a minor character. The non-Conventionists, on their part, insist that the Conventionist rule providing that only Congress committees should elect delegates must not be enforced in their case. And they have good grounds for making this demand. This unfortunate rule was framed with the object of expelling the undesirables from the Congress, the undesirables being the very non-Conventionist leaders! Surely no non-Conventionist can, under such a circumstance, put himself under the operation of this rule, without losing his self-respect and sacrificing his principle. What they, therefore, urge is that they should be allowed to secure their election as delegates at public meetings convened either by some non-party association or by a number of respectable leading men. I think the Conventionists should agree to this reasonable term of the non-Conventionists. Then again, no compromise is possible except on the principle of "give and take". The non-Conventionists have agreed to sign the first article of the Congress Constitution; let the Conventionists also make a similar concession by acknowledging the right of all properly organised public meetings to elect delegates.' Ghose admitted that this concession could only be made by the Congress through an amendment of its constitution. But in order to bring about a united Congress almost immediately and as a practical way out of the difficulty, he suggested a suspension of the rule by the Congress authorities. 'Let the non-Conventionists be elected delegates at public meetings held under the auspices of a respectable non-party public body or a number of leading men of the locality. As Mr. S.K. Altekar of Satara suggests, let them attend the Madras Congress on the first day as visitors on the distinct understanding that the constitution will be so amended by the sitting Congress as to enable them to attend it on the next two days as delegates. When the United Congress is thus formed, let a committee of the leaders of both parties be appointed to revise the existing Conventionist Constitution. In short, the terms of the compromise may be as follows: (1) That the Congress creed (first article of the Constitution) be signed by the non-Conventionists. (2) That the rest of the Constitution be accepted by them tentatively. (3) That delegates elected at public meetings generally shall be deemed to have been duly elected. If it be deemed necessary they may attend the Congress at first as visitors, and after the amendment of the Constitution as delegates. (4) That a committee consisting of the representatives of both parties be appointed, after the formation of the United Congress, to revise the constitution; their report to be submitted to the Congress for disposal.' Ghose revealed that these terms of compromise had been agreed to by prominent 'Conventionist and non-Conventionist leaders of Bengal who recently met to discuss the question of the United Congress'. In his view, they were 'eminently practical and reasonable' and 'entitled to the serious consideration of the two parties in the other provinces'. He went on to say: 'The object of the Conventionist election rule was evidently to prevent the entry of the rowdy element into the Congress; but, I wonder, its comic side did not strike its authors. Fancy that a Congress committee even when consisting of a dozen young men, who have very little position in society, can elect any number of delegates but not a public meeting convened by recognised leaders of Indian opinion! It should be noted here that the chance of creating any disturbance in the Congress hall by evil-disposed delegates has been removed by limiting the number of votes to each province.' Ghose concluded by saying: 'Two weeks more

and the Congress sits. The Secretaries to the All-India Congress Committee should, therefore, lose no time in circulating the members of that Committee to declare whether or not they, at least the majority of them, are willing to throw open the election of delegates to public meetings generally and recognise them as such after amending the constitution, as suggested above. And woe to India if they are not agreeable. It would be a shame and a disgrace if the two parties in the Congress cannot make up their quarrel at a time when even two such bitter enemies as Redmond and Carson have shaken hands and all party factions have disappeared from England. The parties will never be united if they are not united this year.'[138]

While the demand for a united Congress grew in India in 1914, Gokhale was most of the time away in England in connexion with the work of the Public Services Commission. He returned to India on 13 November 1914. On 15 November 1914 Motilal Ghose wrote to him: 'My heart weeps for the motherland. ... I am anxious that you & Tilak should shake hands & embrace each other as brothers. ... I know you bear no malice or ill will to him. I further know that, even if you have any cause for offence, you are generous enough to forgive & forget, especially at the present critical moment. As you are in a more favourable position, it would be a graceful act for you to[make an] advance. If he rejects, the people will blame him & bless you. But I believe he will appreciate your motive ... The so-called Bengali leaders are now fossils. It is Mahratta intellect & patriotism which must save the country. If you & Tilak make up ... there is yet hope for India.'[139] On the same day, Mrs Besant wrote to Gokhale, for whom she had the highest regard[140] and whom she had already publicly acknowledged to be her 'leader',[141] saying that she had been awaiting his return, especially in relation to the question of a Congress compromise, and that she was sending him in another envelope a series of articles and a series of letters on the subject. She sought his advice on the following points: '(1) Is it desirable to close the ranks between the Extremist wing and the Moderates? If yes: (2) What is the best way of doing it?' She added: 'There is a very general feeling here that it is time to forget the Surat trouble and in view of the political changes which will follow the war, to have a united India to formulate its wishes. Mr. Tilak has formally declared for Self-Government *within* the Empire and has abandoned—he says he never advocated—separation. His followers evidently wish for, and his paper advocates, reunion.' A similar wish, she said, was being strongly expressed in Madras and if there were any against it, the minority would be small. 'The presidency of B.N. Basu—who is now looked on as a cautious and moderate man—is a favourable opportunity for reunion, as it would not appear to be forced in any way by a president with Extremist leanings. Personally, I am strongly in favour of union, now that all are willing to work for one goal, the gaining of Self-Government within the Empire by constitutional means. If you approve, the question of method remains. They are willing to accept and sign Article I of the Congress Constitution. They want to elect delegates at public meetings, which is really rather absurd. We suggest, talking over amongst ourselves only, that they should either be elected as delegates to this Congress by local political bodies recognised by the Congress, or, failing this, by bodies like the Mahajana Sabha here, the leading men in which would be willing to elect them (this is quite private), so as to give them a status in the Congress. Then it might be possible to pass an amendment, allowing in future any responsible public body to elect delegates, without its being necessarily recognised by the Congress. The idea is that just as you have in England Tories, Liberals and Radicals in Parliament, but do not expect a Tory organisation to be affiliated to the National Liberal Club, so the Congress should be open to all responsible political organisations in India, and should thus comprise men of

varying opinions, but all accepting Article I as a common basis.' Mrs Besant told Gokhale that if he could indicate his approval or disapproval of the general scope of action as suggested above, she and her associates in Madras would take action accordingly. 'I am not willing to press my own view as to the desirability of closing up our ranks, if you are definitely against it. But if you are not, then I would—with Sir Subramaniam, Diwan Bahadur L.A. Govindaraghava, B.N. Sarma, C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer and others, make a move towards reconciliation. We could do this as acting with your definite approval, or as leaving you free, whichever you thought best. But we will not act *against* your wish.'[142]

On 21 November 1914 B.N. Basu, the president-elect of the next Congress, wrote to Gokhale 'about a matter which is being talked of all over India, namely a reunion of the present body of Congress with those who have seceded'. He referred to 'a small meeting' held in Calcutta the same day 'at which a prominent Bengali representative of the separatists put forward certain propositions and the general view was that the separatists would join if the following procedure was adopted: (1) The next Congress to be held under the present Constitution, facilities being given to the separatists to come in by treating meetings held by them for the election of delegates as held under the auspices of our provincial organisations or by electing their nominees through our organisations. (2) A joint committee to be appointed to revise the Constitution and its rules, the Creed being left intact. (3) The committee to devote the 2nd day of the Congress to settle the Constitution. (4) The Congress to assemble on the 3rd day and pass the Constitution.'[143]

Soon after Gokhale's arrival in Poona in mid-November 1914 the Extremist party started negotiations with him through N.C. Kelkar, editor of the *Mahratta* and Tilak's principal lieutenant, for whom Gokhale himself had 'a genuine regard'. Gokhale was encouraged to think that 'the prospects of a reasonable compromise [were] on the whole fair'. 'And though Tilak gave me to understand that he would not accept the solution then proposed, I was confident that he would have accepted it in the end *as a final settlement,* if matters had remained in my hands.'[144] Tilak himself wrote to Khaparde on 22 November 1914: 'So far as Mr. Gokhale is concerned he would favour the idea of a compromise, but [the Pherozeshah] Mehta party is opposed and will vote against us in the Subjects Committee.'[145]

The next Congress was to assemble at Madras on 28 December 1914 and if the Extremists were to attend it there was not much time to lose. Mrs Besant therefore telegraphed Gokhale on 19 November 1914. 'It is rather urgent to know your views as to Extremists. We are all very anxious to pull them in, those of them that will sign Article I.' She also suggested that she would like to see Gokhale in Poona on 28 November, probably along with Subba Rao and C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar.[146]

In his reply to Mrs Besant, dated 21 November 1914, Gokhale said that the subject of a compromise with the Extremists had never been absent from his thoughts, at any rate during the last five years. He owned up to his responsibility for the provision made in the Congress constitution of 1908 that the election of delegates should be confined to the Congress committees or to public bodies affiliated to them. For this provision to work successfully a network of Congress committees should have been organized at the district and divisional levels all over the country. Unfortunately, this could not be done, and 'by the 1910 Congress at Allahabad it became obvious that the scheme of the constitution as a means of pushing on the Congress organisation had totally failed and that its only utility—real in the beginning, doubtful later on—was to keep those who had seceded from the Congress in 1907—out of that

body'. He then traced the history of the efforts made—mainly at his initiative—from 1910 to 1912 in order to enable the seceders to re-join the Congress by amending the Congress constitution in such a manner as to allow 'the election of delegates by public bodies which accepted Article I as a basic principle of their activity (whether they were affiliated to the Congress or not) or by public meetings held under the auspices of those bodies'. At long last the Bankipur Congress accepted their recommendation, but 'in a mutilated form, namely, by bestowing the right of election on public meetings held under the auspices of the *Congress Committees only.* This, of course, was not calculated to satisfy and did not satisfy the seceders. And that is the position today.' Gokhale went on to say: 'I am very glad that you have taken up this question again in South India and that our venerable leader Sir S. Subramania Iyer has lent the great weight of his name to the attempt for a further compromise on the subject. My strong personal conviction is that a compromise is to be found in the proposal which was discussed and temporarily adopted by the Subjects Committee at Calcutta, namely, by releasing public bodies which declared their acceptance of Article I from the need of obtaining affiliation by Provincial Congress Committees and by empowering them to elect delegates either at their own meetings or at public meetings held under their auspices. I quite agree with you and Sir S. Subramania Iyer that public meetings called by anybody and everybody without the guarantee of some responsible Association behind them are now impossible. But subject to such guarantees being forthcoming, we should advance as far as possible to meet the seceders.' Gokhale did not, however, fail to add: 'I understand from Mr. N.C. Kelkar that while he personally accepts the reasonableness of this solution Mr. Tilak is not inclined at present to accept it. But that is Mr. Tilak's way, and this need not discourage us. But even if Mr. Tilak, in the end, accepts this solution, and knowing him as I do I feel almost certain that he will accept it—it will be necessary to secure the assent of the Bombay party represented by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Mr. Wacha to the change. They may not attend the next Congress, but their hostility to the proposal will be a source of considerable weakness to us all; and as far as possible we should overcome it by approaching them in advance. The best plan for this, I think, will be that Mr. Subba Rao, who will be accompanying you here on the 28th, should, after coming to an understanding with Mr. Tilak, proceed to Bombay and do what he can to secure the passive acquiescence—if nothing stronger—of the Bombay leaders. As regards Bhupendranath, I had a talk with him in England and he now accepts the desirability of the change proposed above.'[147]

Mrs Besant wrote back to Gokhale expressing her great joy over his reaction to the compromise proposal, and adding: 'Things look cheering as regards union; only Bombay is rather black-cloudy. But you know, if you will not mind my saying so, there is a little too much *"non possumus"* there, and the eager younger men will not mark time. You remember when we last met in Poona, and the difficulties we felt. I believe that a strong lead now will bring these dear enthusiastic lads into the constitutional ranks! It is a great opportunity. I have already done something in that way here.'[148]

In reply to B.N. Basu's communication of 21 November 1914, Gokhale sent him a telegram saying: 'Wholeheartedly in favour of bringing back into the Congress fold seceders accepting first article but they can come in this year only through existing Congress organisations or after Congress has amended certain rules. ... I personally favour that all public bodies declaring acceptance of first article whether affiliated to Congress or not should be empowered to elect delegates, also public meetings held under auspices of such bodies. Best

procedure would be for Subbarao to visit Provincial capitals immediately and after securing agreement lay matter before All India [Congress] Committee day or two before Congress meets. I have no objection to your proposal of a committee selected from men attending Congress for certain general revision of Constitution and rules.'[149]

After discussing the matter at 'a small representative conference' in Calcutta, B.N. Basu wrote back to Gokhale on 26 November 1914: 'We have come to this conclusion here: Delegates should be allowed to come in through public meetings, which for the purposes of the next Congress, may be recognized by our Provincial Congress Committees. Of course all would have to accept the creed. On the first day [of the Madras Congress] a committee should be appointed to frame rules and a joint report submitted on the 2nd or 3rd day. I believe the whole matter depends upon Bombay, the other provinces will accept any means to lift the Congress out of the present bog.'[150]

Until the last week of November 1914 the prospects of a Congress compromise seemed fair. Mrs Besant had originally planned to be in Poona on 28 November 1914. She was, however, compelled to postpone her visit until 5 December 1914 in order to suit the convenience of her principal colleague, N. Subba Rao. But, for reasons which can only be guessed, towards the end of November 1914 Gokhale began to have serious doubts about the advisability of her visiting Poona and meeting him and Tilak in connexion with her project of bringing about a united Congress at Madras. He felt that she and her Madras friends were trying 'to rush the thing through'.[151] He feared that her visit to Poona would encourage Tilak 'to raise his terms'.[152] He also feared that she might think 'that the best way to deal with Tilak was to deal with him generously', whereas from his better knowledge of him, he felt that while dealing with Tilak one should 'put caution before generosity'.[153] For these and other reasons, which can only be surmised, Gokhale 'tried to prevent' Mrs Besant's visit to Poona in early December 1914[154] and instructed V.S. Srinivasa Sastri in Madras accordingly.[155] Sastri tried his best to dissuade her from undertaking the journey. He got his friends in Madras to do the same. They used every possible argument against her undertaking the trip. They even 'tried to divert her to Calcutta saying that she must fix Mr. Basu absolutely before bargaining with Tilak'. In fact, as Sastri wrote to Gokhale on 3 December 1914, 'short of a direct refusal to entertain, I have said what in decency could be said to show we did not want her' in Poona. But Mrs Besant was 'bent on going' and she had 'an answer to everything' urged against her planned visit to Poona in the first week of December 1914.[156] Whatever the reasons which prompted Gokhale towards the end of November 1914 to try to prevent Mrs Besant from visiting Poona in early December, one thing is certain, that he had already begun to have second thoughts about the advisability or possibility of bringing about a united Congress at Madras in late December 1914, the more so because he was himself unable to be present on the occasion. Gokhale's subsequent behaviour in this entire episode should be understood against this background. It is not improbable that by late November 1914 he had already started realizing the three main risks involved in having a compromise with the Extremists: first, a schism among the Moderates, leading to the total alienation of Mehta and his group; second, the capture of the Congress, sooner or later, by Tilak and his party; and, third, courting the displeasure of the British government both in India and in England.[157]

Mrs Besant, along with N. Subba Rao, arrived in Poona on 5 December 1914 and stayed as Gokhale's guest in the Home of the Servants of India Society. It is not improbable that Gokhale impressed her and Subba Rao with the need for caution while negotiating with Tilak next day

and also with his own diminished enthusiasm for a united Congress at Madras later in the month. Tilak had already sounded most of his close associates about the attitude to be adopted by him towards the subject of Congress reunion during his meeting with Mrs Besant.[158] Some of them—such as R.P. Karandikar, V.G. Bijapurkar, N.C. Kelkar, B.S. Moonje, S.M. Paranjpe and K.P. Khadilkar—even participated in the discussion which Tilak had with Mrs Besant and Subba Rao on 6 December 1914 at his residence, known as Gaikwar Wada, in Poona. The discussion centred round the following main points: (1) the desirability of providing the Extremists with independent constituencies for electing delegates to the Congress; (2) the arrangements to be made for enabling the Extremists to attend the forthcoming Madras session of the Congress; and (3) the general attitude of the Extremists towards the Congress and its programme. 'The result,' wrote Tilak to Khaparde, who could not be present at the talks, 'as we expected, was disappointing. We all saw that Sir Pherozeshah Mehta was the chief difficulty in our way. Mrs. Besant thinks that if she approaches Mehta the cause may be spoilt and so Subba Rao has gone to Bombay. But I am sure that Mr. Mehta would dispose him of in a few minutes.'[159] Obviously, from the every start of the negotiations both parties realized that the question of a Congress compromise was not so much a matter of creed, constituencies and co-operation between competing groups, as of who was going to govern and guide the Congress and how, and that the decision in the matter lay less with Gokhale than with Mehta, who had always been of the view that a united Congress would mean an Extremist Congress.

Subba Rao 'returned disappointed from Bombay' on 8 December 1914 and 'told and discussed' with Tilak that very day—as he must have done with Gokhale—what the attitude of 'the Bombay Conventionists' was in the matter.[160] What followed is thus described by Tilak: 'When I went to see him [Subba Rao] the next morning [9 December] he had at his own initiation reduced to writing the main points in our conversation and reading them to me asked if I had any corrections to suggest. I suggested a few and he made them in his own hand; and the statement remained with him.'[161] It was later, in early February 1915, released to the press and read as follows: 'The Extremists or Nationalists form the advanced wing of the Congress. Their attitude is generally one of constitutional opposition to the Government, while that of the Moderates or Constitutionalists is generally one of co-operation with Government. Though the ideal of both is the same, namely self-government within the Empire, the difference between them lies in the methods adopted by them for reaching the goal. The Nationalists are, and have been, willing to join the Congress, but they feel that they are humiliated by the way in which the Congress Constitution was framed, especially with reference to the election of delegates. They do not want to come into the Congress through the present Congress Committees, and object to personal inquisition not regulated by rules, which should now be framed, and hence they do not desire to apply for the affiliation of their associations to the present Provincial Congress Committees. They wish to join the Congress only if separate and independent constituencies (of course accepting Article I of the Constitution) are created which should automatically have the right to elect delegates, either at meetings of such bodies or at public meetings convened under their auspices. If this is done it is their intention to take steps to widen the door of elections as before to all public meetings, if necessary, and get recognition of their methods by educating public opinion and working for and securing a majority in the Congress, if possible. They are, and have been, willing to take the decision of the majority as binding on them, and in cases where such decision is against them they would wait till opinion is created in their favour and not leave the Congress by quarrelling with the majority. If such

constituencies are not created, they would prefer to stand out and may have to organise a National League on their own lines and carry on their work independently of the Congress.'[162]

Subba Rao had already, on 8 December 1914, communicated to Gokhale the substance of this so-called statement by Tilak. According to Gokhale, he himself had been in favour of compromise until 8 December 1914, but Tilak's 'statement' came upon him 'as a bolt from the blue' and made him change his mind. As he said in a public statement issued on 9 February 1915, 'in view of Mr. Tilak's explicit statements made to Mr. Subba Rao [on 8 December 1914], it became my clear duty to the Congress to withdraw my support from the proposed amendment, and I sent word to Mrs. Besant to this effect by Mr. Subba Rao, when he left for Madras the next day'.[163]

Writing to B.N. Basu on 14 December 1914, only a few days after the event, Gokhale explained at length why and how he was compelled to change his mind: 'The position taken up by Mr. Tilak in his talks with Mr. Subba Row (not with Mrs. Besant) here last week brings us up against difficulties which are fundamental and go to the very root of the Congress. When Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and I and others urged at Calcutta three years ago that the right of electing delegates should be restored to public meetings, held under auspices which guaranteed the acceptance of Art. I by those who took part in the meetings, we were under the impression that our Extremist friends in the different provinces had by that time seen the error of their ways and had come to realise that the only political work possible in the existing circumstances of the country was on the lines of the Congress; that they wanted quietly to return to the Congress fold; but that considerations of self-respect stood in their way, as they did not like to apply for election to those whom they considered to be their opponents; and it was therefore desirable to so relax the rigidity of our rules as to make it less humiliating to these countrymen of ours to rejoin the Congress. We were also swayed in our attitude by the extreme desirability of taking an early opportunity to heal the breach in public life that had resulted from the split of 1907, so that the rising generation of the country should not have to grow up under the baleful tradition of that breach. And this was really my view of the matter till last week and I was prepared to do what lay in my power to bring opinion round to it in the Congress, short, of course, of breaking with those whose lead I have followed or with whom I have worked all these years. I regret, however, to say that the statement of his position made by Mr. Tilak to Mr. Subba Row last week has shaken me altogether as regards the advisability of the relaxation in rules that I have favoured these three years. My hope was that if we enabled the seceders by such relaxation to come in, they would, having seen the impossibility of political action on any other lines, co-operate with us in furthering the programme of the Congress by present methods. That hope, however, has now been shattered. Mr. Tilak has told Mr. Subba Row frankly and in unequivocal terms that though he accepts the position laid down in what is known as the Congress creed, viz., that the aim of the Congress is the attainment by India of self-government within the Empire by constitutional means, he does not believe in the present methods of the Congress, which rest on association with Government where possible, and opposition to it where necessary. In place of these he wants to substitute the method of opposition to Government pure and simple within constitutional limits—in other words a policy of Irish obstruction. We on our side are agitating for a larger and larger share in the Government of the country—in the Legislative Councils, on Municipal and Local Boards, in Public Services and so forth. Mr. Tilak wants to address only one demand to the Government here and to the British public in England, viz., for the concession of self-government to India

and till that is conceded, he would urge his countrymen to have nothing to do with these questions of either the Public Services or Legislative Councils and Local and Municipal Boards. And by organising obstruction to Government in every possible direction within the limits of the laws of the land, he hopes to be able to bring the administration to a standstill, and compel the authorities to capitulate. This is briefly his programme and he says that he wants to work for its realisation through the Congress if he and his followers are enabled to rejoin it or, failing this, by starting a new organisation to be called the National League. He has explicitly told Mr. Subba Row that he gives us fair warning that this is his purpose in seeking readmission into the Congress fold and that once he is inside, he will strive first for effecting such changes in the rules as will throw open election as delegate practically to everybody as before 1907 and then for getting the Congress to endorse his programme by securing at its sessions the attendance of a majority of delegates of his way of thinking. Some of Mr. Tilak's friends here are disconcerted by the line he has taken with Mr. Subba Row, but I personally feel really grateful to him for his candour, for if after his clear warning we take steps to facilitate his return to the Congress, we shall have to thank only ourselves for the consequences that are bound to ensue. One or two friends here have tried to minimise the seriousness of Mr. Tilak's statement by saying that though Mr. Tilak may profess these intentions and views, he will not have a sufficient following to carry them out in practice, as his programme is not, by a long long way, feasible in the present circumstances of India. I agree that the programme, if sought to be carried out, is incapable of achievement, at any rate for a long time to come. I am also clear in my own mind that if Mr. Tilak tries to establish a new organisation for the furtherance of his views, it will be suppressed by Government forthwith, just as they did not allow the proposed Extremist Congress of 1908 to be held at Nagpur. But what I do *not* consider equally impossible is Mr. Tilak bringing to a session of the Congress a sufficient number of men prepared to vote as he directs and give him a majority expressing a kind of academic approval of his views. There is no limit at present and it is not possible to devise a limit in practice to the number of delegates that any place may send, so it will resolve itself largely into a question of delegation fees and travelling expenses for a certain number of Tilak's followers. Should he succeed in doing this, I feel almost certain that it will mean the end of the Congress, for the authorities will not fail to deal drastically with the situation and suppress the movement. But even if he does not succeed in securing a majority, it will virtually mean a return to the state of things that prevailed in 1906 and in 1907, when all our energies had to be given to preventing Mr. Tilak and other Extremist leaders from capturing the Congress, involving a strain that was wellnigh intolerable.

'The question thus is, are we to go through all this struggle over again? It may be said that even if Mr. Tilak makes himself thus impossible by reason of the views and intentions which he has professed, that is no justification for keeping the door closed against those seceders who want to come back and co-operate with us in pushing forward the programme of the Congress by present methods. But how are we to devise a relaxation, which will bring these men in and leave Mr. Tilak and those who are of his way of thinking out? Moreover, a reconciliation which leaves the most important leader of the other side out, will be found in reality to be no reconciliation at all. No, I fear we must either have all of them, including Mr. Tilak, in, in which case his powerful and restless personality will again draw to itself the seceders and recreate our old trouble, or else we must keep the present restrictions as they are and leave it to individual seceders to come back through the existing recognised organisations. It is a great

disappointment to me to be driven to this conclusion, but the astonishing position taken up by Mr. Tilak, who obviously has learnt nothing and unlearnt nothing during all these years, makes it our clear duty to give up the idea of making changes which will bring back into the Congress men of his way of thinking. I see it stated in some of the special articles that have appeared in the press in favour of United Congress, that, as the House of Commons has within it different parties representing different views, our Congress should also find room within it for all who are in favour of self-government within the Empire for India, however they differ in their methods. But surely the Congress is not a legislative assembly, where all interests must be represented. It is a propagandist movement whose effectiveness for advance must depend upon the unanimity with which its operations are conducted and which must be paralysed in proportion as it has divided counsels at its head.'[164]

In another letter to B.N. Basu, dated 25 December 1914, Gokhale thus summed up his position: 'I am in favour of anything that is reasonable being done to bring back the seceders, *provided* they want to come back to co-operate with us in carrying out the present programme of the Congress by present methods. If, however, they want to revive the struggle of 1906 and 1907, which terminated in the split at Surat—as Mr. Tilak has distinctly told Mr. Subba Row—I am firmly opposed to any changes that would facilitate their return. The Congress may be suffering from declining enthusiasm, but the causes of it are to be found not so much in the split of 1907 as in the present characteristics of our race. You will remember that the lowest point reached by the Congress was in 1903 at Madras, when there was no split. I hope nothing will be done that will bring about another and in some respects even a more disastrous schism in the Congress than that of 1907. The best course to my mind in the circumstances is to postpone the consideration of the question for another year, so that the negotiations may be resumed and definite assurances may, if possible, be obtained from the leaders of the seceders that they will not seek to overthrow the present programme and substitute other methods for present methods. Failing such assurances, my clear opinion is that we must be prepared to go on as we have been doing these seven years. You certainly will not add to the strength of the Congress, whatever the increase in the number of delegates—and that will only be temporary—by a revival of the state of things which prevailed in 1906 and 1907.'[165]

The motives of men—even of the greatest and the best of them—are mixed and generally difficult to divine. It may well be that Gokhale was finally forced to change his mind on the compromise question on 8 December 1914 after hearing from Subba Rao what Tilak had told him about his views and intentions that day. But after a very careful and close examination of all the available evidence relating to this episode one cannot help feeling that Tilak's so-called statement of 8 December 1914 only served to confirm and clinch what Gokhale probably had already started feeling regarding the likely consequences of a compromise with the Extremists. At best, it was the proverbial last straw. It also provided Gokhale and his friends with an excellent occasion and an excuse for their change of front.[166] However, leaving aside the questions relating to Gokhale's motives in changing his mind and to the timing of that change, one cannot but be a little astonished at his naivety or lack of information and judgement when one finds him saying that even as late as early December 1914 he continued to believe that the Extremists had realized their mistake, that they were anxious to rejoin the Congress in order to promote its present programme by its present methods, and that they could be used to provide grist to the mills of the Moderates and be the instruments of the latter's purpose. For the leader of a faction in the Congress movement to suppose that his adversaries would accept any

settlement which did not suit their ends as final, that they would be satisfied with remaining a minority in the Congress organization, irrespective of their strength and influence outside in the country, dutifully accepting and carrying out the mandates of those who happened to be in a majority at the moment, seems to be both unfair and unintelligent. Moreover, for Gokhale to insist in 1914 that Indian patriots could not pursue any other methods than those which they had pursued so far, or that they should not try to pursue other methods simply because their British rulers would not permit them to do so, almost amounted to admitting a lack of courage and resourcefulness on the part of the Moderate section of Indian nationalists.

Gokhale's change of mind on the Congress compromise issue at the eleventh hour caused a good deal of consternation and confusion in the Moderate camp, particularly among those who had supported his stand and worked with him towards that end. Great hopes for a reunion among Congressmen had been aroused in the country because of the developments during the preceding weeks and months. Mrs Besant dashed to Calcutta on 14 December 1914 in a last-minute bid to avoid a total failure. In Bengal in particular prominent Moderates and Extremists had met in a conference at Calcutta on 25 November 1914 and almost signed a compromise deal.[167] B.N. Basu, the president-elect of the Congress, was placed in an extremely awkward situation. He wrote to Gokhale on 10 December 1914: 'Babu Motilal [Ghose] showed me a letter which Mr. Tilak has written to him, from which it appears that all hope of reconciliation this year is gone. What has become of your idea of throwing open election to public meetings? Is it repudiated in Bombay? The Bengal seceders were willing to go as visitors and then after a resolution was passed amending the Constitution, in this respect, join as delegates. Can this be managed?'[168] Basu also wired to Mrs Besant saying that 'Motilal Ghose and his friends will stay out if Tilak does, and that if ... [she] can do anything'.[169] On 21 December 1914 Basu wrote to Gokhale: 'Mrs. Besant was here yesterday. Babu Motilal Ghose and his party were willing to come in but they wanted that Tilak and his party should also come in. As you have not elected them in Bombay, Moti Babu and Mrs. Besant pressed us to elect them. This I could not agree to and thus the *"rapprochement"* fails. Mrs. Besant has pledged herself to Tilak to move an amendment of the rule as regards election of delegates. You remember my old attitude on the question. I shall adhere to my views, but of course I see that the Congress is a decadent movement and it badly wants life: the question is, how is the Congress to be brought into contact with the living life of the country? ... it will be a great help to us, if you write to me at Madras giving me your views in a way that I can place before our friends.'[170] Even when all hope seemed to be lost, Basu took Motilal Ghose along with him to the Madras Congress. When he arrived at Rajahmundry railway station on his way to Madras, Basu was presented with an address by the local citizens in which he was requested to bring about reunion among Congressmen. In his reply to the address, Basu remarked that he had been trying for reunion since 1908, but his efforts had failed because of the opposition of a certain section of Congressmen. He promised that at the next Congress he would use all his tact and moderation in order to bring about the necessary reconciliation. It was for this reason, he said, that he had persuaded Motilal Ghose to accompany him. In Bengal there were no two parties. Panjab had been showing little interest in the Congress since 1908. 'If Madras and other Provinces are also with us, and even if one Presidency opposes, I hope we shall be able to widen the constitution, thus enable the seceders to come back into the Congress and make it united. ... If we fail this year, the only other alternative that we can have recourse to for effecting the union is to take the Congress once again to Calcutta.'[171] On 26 December 1914 a meeting of the

reception committee of the Madras Congress was held in the Congress pavilion, with C. Vijiaraghavachariar in the chair, and 'by a substantial majority' passed a resolution 'requesting the Subjects Committee of the Congress to place before the Congress a resolution to amend the Constitution of the Congress so as to accept the right of electing delegates to all public meetings convened by associations or bodies which have for one of their objects the attainment by India of Colonial self-government within the British Empire as described in Article I of the present Constitution'.[172]

Opinion in the country generally, and in Madras in particular, was strongly in favour of Congress reunion. The *Hindu* wrote: 'It is ... vain to assert that the National Congress as now constituted comes up to the requirements of the time. ... If the Congress is to be a living and vigorous and not a languishing political entity ... it must lose no time in putting its house in order and endeavour by its actions to work up to the national ideal which was in the mind's eye of its patriotic founders. It is not a satisfactory feature of the present Congress that an important Indian Province, the Punjab, is entirely unrepresented in it and that certain well-known classes and sections of the Indian community are most inadequately represented.'[173]

Mrs Besant herself, though she publicly regretted Tilak's 'unfortunate statement' to Subba Rao, blamed him for the failure of the unity talks and supported Gokhale's change of mind,[174] in private 'made it clear that ... [the Moderates] were in her opinion unjust to Tilak in supposing that by "obstruction and opposition" he meant making Government impossible or that inside Congress he intended to create trouble and paralyse regular work. He was, besides, not likely to have a majority for some years yet. He had suffered for the country and was idolised by the young. Old people had no business to stand in the way of progressive ideas. It was possible to think too much of Government and its good opinion. The accession of Tilak's party would bring fresh vitality and influence to Congress.'[175]

Soon after he changed his mind finally on the compromise question on 8 December 1914, Gokhale wrote numerous letters to his trusted friends and disciples in all parts of the country, informing them of the fact, giving them a rather exaggerated and alarmist version of Tilak's views and intentions, and instructing them to see to it that the question was not taken up at the forthcoming Congress at Madras. Opinion among the delegates who assembled at the Madras Congress was strongly in favour of a compromise, and if there had been a vote in the open session it would have gone against Gokhale. Gokhale's friends and disciples had to work hard in order to block any move for unity. They used his private communications very effectively to convert many leading Moderate Congressmen to his view. They tried to pack the subjects committee with their supporters. And they raised the bogey that Tilak would capture the Congress if public meetings were allowed, even with safeguards, to elect delegates to the Congress.

Though neither Gokhale nor Tilak was present at the Madras Congress in late December 1914, they dominated its proceedings.[176] There was a great deal of heated debate and controversy over what they had actually said or done earlier during the month in connexion with the abortive talks for a Congress compromise. Mrs Besant kept her word to Tilak and in the subjects committee moved two amendments to the Congress constitution which aimed at facilitating the re-entry of the Extremists in the organization by providing them, as they desired, with independent constituencies in the form of responsibly organized public bodies and meetings. Fearing that a frontal opposition to Mrs Besant' amendments might fail, the Moderate hawks agreed to the appointment of a special committee to examine the amendments

and report at the next Congress.[177] But, having got a decision on the Besant amendments postponed for a year, they very cleverly managed to invite the next Congress to Bombay, which was their stronghold and where they hoped 'the whole thing will be effectually and finally dealt with'.[178]

While the Moderate hawks naturally rejoiced over their temporary triumph at the Madras Congress of 1914, there was widespread disappointment and grief all over the country at its outcome. The 'Special Correspondent' of the *Tribune* lamented the loss of 'a splendid opportunity' for reunion because of the 'Machiavellian' tactics of a 'powerful clique of anti-nationalists', who were anxious for 'the maintenance of their close preserve, free from the intrusion of men who have been guilty of having their own independent views differing from their own on public questions. The only public ground urged in its favour, so far as I know, after taking pains to know, is that if Mr. B.G. Tilak came into Congress, the confidence of the Government which it now enjoys would be withdrawn and this might handicap us in the appeal for autonomy and other favours which we are now making.' He blamed, in particular, N.M. Samarth, G.K. Devadhar, N.M. Joshi, G.A. Natesan and R.N. Mudholkar for having engineered tactics for defeating the proposal for a united Congress. He was also critical of the president, B.N. Basu, who went back on his promise to take the Congress to Calcutta in 1915 and allowed it to be invited to Bombay, 'the headquarters of the Separatists'.[179]

Mrs Besant wrote: 'Perhaps the most significant incident in the [Madras] Congress was the answer to Sir Vithaldas Thackersay's invitation of the Congress to Bombay. The reply crashed out: "United India!". He went on to say that Bombay would welcome them and make them very comfortable. "United India!" "United India!" rang round the pandal. There is no doubt that popular feeling, instinctive and generous, frets against the *non possumus* of the Congress leaders, and instantly demands that a way may be opened through which all who accept, as ideal, self-government for India within the Empire, and, as means, constitutional methods may pass into the Council of the Nation. This question, if the Congress leaders recognised the nature and depth of the feeling among their followers and in the Nation at large, should have been set at rest, so that all might unite in diligent preparation for the practical task of self-government. ... It was a pathetic sight to see Mr. Motilal Ghose, frail and ill, sitting silent, having been duly and constitutionally elected as a delegate, but not presenting his credentials, and remaining as a visitor, out of loyalty to his Deccan friends. The veteran went back saddened by the frustration of his hopes.'[180]

In a letter to the editor of the *Hindu,* 6 January 1915, S. Satyamurti described the previous Congress as 'a dismal failure', condemned its 'inability or unwillingness to heal the breach', and added: 'To anyone who has closely watched the working of the Congress since 1908, it must be fairly evident, that there are two bureaucracies in India, the Anglo-Indian and the Congress and that of the two, the worse is the Congress bureaucracy, since it is more autocratic and more personal.'[181] Writing to the editor of the same paper, T. Rangachari remarked a few days later that 'all India has to wait because Bombay is not ready'.[182]

The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote on 5 January 1915: 'The Conventionist Congress is ... a farce and a delusion. It has no men, and hence it commands no confidence from the nation, and the general public show no interest in it. It is now regarded as a white elephant, which costs at least a lakh of rupees annually, and does nothing but make some speeches and pass a few stereotyped resolutions. ... As we have said again and again, unless there be a united Congress the Conventionist organisation is bound to die in due course. In preventing this unity, the

Conventionist leaders have, therefore, committed suicide and sounded the death-knell of the Congress.'[183]

'It was expected', wrote the *Mahratta* on 3 January 1915, 'that the question of closing the Congress breach would be solved in the moderate atmosphere of Madras. But the decision arrived at only emphasised the sectional character of the Congress and its inability to solve questions of general interest in a non-sectarian spirit.' The paper believed that from the non-Conventionist point of view there had been only one gain, namely 'that a Conventionist Committee has been appointed so that it can no longer be urged that the matter has never been placed before the Conventionists for their consideration. If they refuse to widen the gates then they can be charged with bringing the Congress from a national to a sectional platform or in Mrs. Besant's words from a parliament of the nation to a Conventionist club. ... The non-Conventionist party must understand that they are not wanted by some Conventionist leaders whose voice now governs their club and as this meets next year in Bombay, there is little chance of any progress being made . ...'[184]

The Moderate hawks obviously thought that by entrusting the question of a Congress compromise to a special committee and by inviting the Congress to hold its 1915 session at Bombay they had successfully hoodwinked their adversaries and averted the evil day for a long time. They delayed convening the meeting of the special committee until October 1915 and then postponed it until 25 December 1915. But the Extremists fully understood the Moderates' game and they now had friends and allies in the Moderate camp itself. They had succeeded in creating a deep schism in the Moderate ranks. The Moderates were already becoming increasingly alienated from the Indian people. The Extremists saw to it that this process was accelerated. The death of Gokhale in February 1915 and that of Mehta in November 1915 deprived the Moderates of two of their most capable leaders. Mehta's death, in particular, was disastrous for the Moderate cause. It deprived them of their greatest and most resourceful leader and removed the biggest stumbling block in the way of Congress reunion. The *Leader* wrote on 12 November 1915: 'After the departure of Mr. Hume and Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee, it could be said of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta that he was the Indian National Congress. This is the greater tribute to the power of his personality in that he was [more] often absent from than present at successive sittings of the national assembly.'[185] The *Indian Social Reformer* remarked on 13 November 1915: 'Not many days ago, we read in a Punjab paper ... that until the tyranny of Bombay was broken, there can be no freedom of public life in India. ... The supremacy of Bombay in the political life ... was the supremacy of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, and of no one else.'[186] But even if Mehta had not died, it is extremely doubtful whether the Moderate hawks, with their philosophy of 'masterly inactivity' or what the *Leader* once described as 'do-nothingism',[187] would have found it possible to resist for long the tremendous pressure which the unionists, now ably led by persons like Mrs Besant, Tilak and C.R. Das, kept up throughout 1915 by their ceaseless propaganda in the press, by their numerous district and provincial conferences all over the country, in almost total disregard of the exclusion clauses of the Congress constitution, and, finally, by launching a campaign in favour of Home Rule for India. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* frankly admitted on 12 November 1915 that it supported the campaign for organizing Home Rule Leagues in India 'not so much for being able to secure self-government for us as for uniting the two wings of the Congress through a new organisation'.[188] The *Mahratta* wrote on 28 November 1915: 'The country has given its verdict. The exclusion of the Nationalists from the Congress has been reprobated by the

country. "Unite" is the commandment of the country and the irreconcilables who still want to arrest the movement of nationalism are fast fading into insignificance. The Congress exists no doubt, but it has ceased to represent the people.'[189]

As in 1914 at Madras, a large number of delegates came to attend the 1915 session of the Congress at Bombay in the hope that it would lead to unity in the ranks of the Indian nationalists. The decision of the All-India Muslim League, now firmly under the control of the Muslim progressives, to hold its annual session at Bombay almost simultaneously with that of the Congress, also served to swell the attendance.

It was still a Congress of the Moderates from which the Extremists were excluded. But the large turnout at Bombay · December 1915 was not in order to support the designs of the Moderate hawks but to thwart them and, instead, promote the cause of reunion. True, the president of the session, Sir S.P. Sinha, was a moderate of the moderates, but he was a mere figurehead. With Mrs Besant and her friends—both Hindu and Muslim—active from the inside, and Tilak and his associates almost besieging it from the outside, the Bombay Congress ignored the feeble and last-ditch opposition of the Moderate hawks and voted for reunion by allowing associations and public meetings, with due safeguards, to elect delegates to the Congress.[190]

Tilak and his associates decided to 'join the Congress by taking advantage of the partial opening made for us and then strive to open the door full and wide'.[191] Both he and Mrs Besant embarked upon a large-scale organization of Home Rule Leagues throughout the country in 1916. These Home Rule Leagues were alleged to be 'auxiliaries' to the Congress, but they served to undermine still further the authority and influence of the old Moderate leadership both within the organization and outside it. They were frankly propagandist. They tried to make the demand for Home Rule a strong and overmastering creed in India. They provided the country with a popular slogan and a widespread organization. They brought within their fold Moderates and Extremists, the old and the young, and men and women of various classes, creeds and regions.

The increasing alienation of the younger generation from the Moderate-dominated Congress had been a frequent subject of comment even in earlier years. But from 1914 onwards it seems to have become more marked. On 11 December 1914 T.B. Sapru had written that 'the distance in many parts of the country between older men and younger men is becoming wider'.[192] G. Ramachandra Rao remarked on 8 February 1915: 'One regrettable feature, noticeable in the Congress of late years, has been the estrangement that has been rapidly growing between the Congress leaders and the younger generation in the country.'[193] The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote on 12 November 1915: 'The rising generation has very little sympathy with the present Congress which can only talk but does not work.'[194] Munshi Iswar Saran thus analysed the situation in an article in the *Leader,* dated 20 February 1916: 'A great change is coming over the outlook of the rising generation. Their notions of public life and leadership are not the same as they were a quarter of a century ago. ... The younger men fail to understand how a movement which only wakes up from its sleep for three days in the year is going to bring about the political uplift of a vast country like India. ... They decline to look upon a man as their leader because he has a big balance in the bank or some big title with which to embellish his name. Mere intellectual eminence or even success at the Bar does not fascinate them. What appeals to them irresistibly is the capacity for labour and sacrifice. ... They hold that the days of arm-chair politicians are gone; this, they assert, is the time for stormy and tempestuous

patriotism. In short, they are prepared to regard only those as their leaders who lead lives consecrated to service and sacrifice. A high standard this, no doubt, but leadership, they declare, should be a prize not to be easily won.'[195] Far more prescient was a political commentator who wrote in the *Indu Prakash* in late 1916: 'The new generation that is being prepared in political life does not wholly like the old Moderate party, neither does it like the old Nationalist party in all its aspects. This is a fact which can be observed by anyone who looks at things closely.'[196] This was very true. The old Moderate party had served its purpose and its programme stood discredited. The old Extremist party did not inspire much confidence either and its programme of the bomb and the boycott, of which the country had had some taste earlier, was wholly negative. Young nationalist India needed a new leadership and a new programme. It was also sick and tired of the running feud among the older leaders. In an editorial, dated 6 January 1918, the *Leader* expressed its dissatisfaction with the kind of leadership being provided to the Congress party by Mrs Besant and Tilak, lamented the absence of any real leader on the Moderate side as well, and added: 'There is one man, Mr. Gandhi, who has qualities which could any day make him a much greater leader than any other person in the country. But he takes a line of his own, and does not choose to identify himself with any organised body of opinion.'[197]

For the time being, however, Mrs Besant and Tilak occupied the centre of the political stage in India and gave the British government great cause for anxiety. In a note, dated 17 January 1917, the home member of the government of India, Sir Reginald Craddock, wrote: 'The position is one of great difficulty. The moderate leaders can command no support among the vocal classes who are being led at the heels of Tilak and Besant. The greater figures among the moderates have passed away, and so far they have no successors. Home Rule is pressed for not so much as a constitutional reform now becoming due, but as the only salvation from innumerable wrongs and grievances under which India is suffering ... under cover of constitutional agitation, the minds of the people ... are being steadily poisoned against the British Government ... .'[198] A month later, on 19 February 1917, Craddock wrote: 'Sedition in India is like the tides which erode a coast line as the sea encroaches. The last high tide was in 1907-1908. The tide then went out, but it is flowing in now rapidly, and it will reach a point now higher than it ever reached before. We must have our dam in order lest it inundate sound land.'[199]

The projected dam against the rising tide of nationalist agitation was twofold: on the one hand a declaration of British policy, such as had been suggested as early as December 1915 by S.P. Sinha while presiding over the Bombay Congress mainly as a shot in the arm for the Moderates. The other side was a curb on the activities of the most prominent leader of the Indian nationalist movement at the time, Mrs Besant. The government tried prevention first and on 16 June 1917 interned Mrs Besant, along with two of her colleagues, B.P. Wadia and G.S. Arundale. The immediate effect was to make Mrs Besant a hero and a martyr and enormously to increase her hold on the Congress and the country. Gandhi, who was at that time deliberately trying to keep out of controversial politics and was frankly critical of Mrs Besant's activities, wrote to J.L. Maffey, private secretary to the viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, on 10 July 1917: 'In my humble opinion, the internments are a big blunder. Madras was absolutely calm before then. Now it is badly disturbed. India as a whole had not made common cause with Mrs. Besant, but now she is in a fair way towards commanding India's identity with her methods. ... The Congress was trying to "capture" Mrs. Besant, the latter was trying to "capture" the former. Now they have almost become one.'[200]

'Rally the moderates' had been the watchword of Morley and Minto. So was it of Montagu and Chelmsford. We noted in chapter three that it was not so much the clamour of the radicals as the friendly pressure of the moderate elements in India which had persuaded the British authorities to make the declaration of 20 August 1917. We also noted that the declaration was the result of an understanding between the leading Moderates in the Congress and the government which required the former, in their turn, to break away from the Extremists and to oppose their methods and objectives. Not unexpectedly, therefore, the Moderates, having got a declaration of British policy and an assurance of reasonable reforms after the war, as they had demanded, proceeded to carry out their part of the engagement. This meant a revival of the old conflict between the Moderates and the Extremists.

In late August 1917 the Bengal Moderates tried unsuccessfully to prevent the election of Mrs Besant as president of the forthcoming Congress at Calcutta.[201] On 10 November 1917, Prithwis Chandra Ray, a leading Bengali Moderate, wrote a letter to Moderate Congressmen throughout India, saying: 'In co-operation with some very influential friends, I am making a serious effort to find out if there is, in any quarter, any particular desire to establish a moderate organisation, and, if so, on what lines it should be founded. It is proposed to hold an informal conference of leading moderate politicians of all India sometime during the next Christmas holidays to discuss the advisability of such an organisation and to take such steps as may be necessary in consequence of its decision.' Ray emphasized that the time had come for establishing such an organization in view of 'the fact that the moderate party has been swept off the field of politics by a new broom' and the Congress and all its machinery had 'practically been captured by the extremist party'.[202] The weekly report of the director of criminal intelligence, dated 15 December 1917, contained the following from an 'Indian Correspondent': 'The elections to the A.I.C.C. in Bengal, Bombay and Madras, which took place during the week constitute an event of note in connection with the future of the Congress movement. In Madras the local machinery of the Congress was captured by the Besantites last year. In Bombay and Bengal they have completed the capture this year, and the Moderates have been completely swept away. It is quite possible that this triumph of the extremists may lead the Moderates in the various provinces to start a new organization of their own. In all the provinces the Moderates just now are in a minority.'[203] The Bombay Moderates stayed away from the Calcutta Congress in December 1917 ostensibly on the ground that they were too busy preparing to wait in deputation on the secretary of state, Montagu, then visiting India, but really because they knew 'that the Congress has practically gone out of their hands' and 'that the overwhelming majority of the Besant and Tilak parties will outshine them in the Subjects Committee'.[204] It was mainly due to the moderating influence of men like Malaviya and Tilak that an open split was with extreme difficulty avoided at the Calcutta Congress.[205] But the director of criminal intelligence said: 'This year the Congress has entered a new phase. After being nursed for the last ten years by the Moderates, it has been captured completely by the extremists. The Home Rulers have succeeded not merely in securing the Presidentship for their leader but also in dominating the All-India Congress Committee, and hence the Congress executive is now entirely in the hands of the adherents of Home Rule. The organisation has thus completely passed into their hands and the last link of the Moderates with the Congress has been snapped with the resignation of the General Secretaryship by Mr. N. Subba Rao, as he is unwilling to work with the Home Rule propagandists.'[206] He also recorded that an informal conference of 'Indian politicians of the Moderate party' was held in Calcutta on 30 December

1917 'to discuss their future policy'. Though its proceedings were confidential, it was understood that disapproval was expressed of the conduct of the Extremists and Home Rulers in embarrassing the government during the war and in making impossible demands. 'The Moderates', he added, 'wish to recapture the Congress rather than to secede from it, but in present conditions there seems little prospect of their success.'[207]

The first tentative steps towards the formation of 'a new Moderate party', to be called 'the National Liberal League', were taken in Bengal in early January 1918 at a private meeting of Moderate leaders like Nilratan Sircar, P.C. Mitter, Sir B.C. Mitter, and P.C. Ray. The League was to have its headquarters at Calcutta and branches all over India. It was to 'have nothing to do with the Congress as it is now constituted'. Its object was 'to encourage responsible thinking on Indian politics' and 'nobody who has subscribed to Home Rule for India will be admitted as a member'.[208] Soon S.N. Banerjea was persuaded to become its president.[209] The League was formally launched in early June 1918.[210] Its declared objective was 'the attainment of responsible government [for India] as an integral part of the British Empire by methodical and ordered progress'.[211] Even before the Montagu-Chelmsford report was published in July 1918, the Moderates had begun to canvass support for it.[212] On 19 February 1918 V. Srinivasa Sastri's weekly paper from Poona, the *Servant of India,* made its first appearance. Borrowing the famous words of the late M.G. Ranade, it declared liberalism and moderation to be its watchwords.[213] The contention of the Moderates later, that they were scared by the manner in which the Extremists reacted to the Montagu-Chelmsford report into abstaining from the Congress and into forming a separate organization of their own, is hardly borne out by the facts. The minds of most of them were, in truth, already made up.

Montagu and Chelmsford were also desirous of having the Moderates on their side and weaning them away from the Extremists. Their reform proposals were framed in close consultation with the leading Moderates within the Congress. Some of them, for instance, S.P. Sinha, B.N. Basu and Sankaran Nair, were already in the inner councils of the government. Others, like Srinivasa Sastri, T.B. Sapru, C.Y. Chintamani and C.H. Setalvad, were taken by Montagu into his confidence and told of the proposed scheme of reforms.[214] They were not entirely pleased with the scheme, for they felt that it did not go far enough and would not satisfy the country. But they were all profoundly impressed with Mantagu's personality, his honesty, earnestness and sincerity of purpose. They found him extremely sympathetic and determined to do his very best for India. And, above all, they were made to recognize the immense difficulties under which the secretary of state was labouring—a coalition government in England, the danger of encountering opposition from Curzon and Milner in the cabinet, the known antipathy of the government of India to any weakening of central authority, and the already pronounced hostility of the civil services and Anglo-Indian circles, both in England and India, to any sweeping reforms. The Moderates were, in effect, told to be realistic and not to look at the shortcomings of the first instalment, but to ask 'whether it led assuredly to self-government'.[215] Situated as the Moderates were, they decided to make the most of whatever was attainable under the circumstances and, in any case, not to let the secretary of state down, for, if they were only half-converted to his scheme, they had become full converts to Montagu himself.[216]

Montagu was conscious of the fact that his scheme fell 'far short of the circumstances of the country',[217] that it stood 'no chance of public acceptance'[218] and would be 'none too popular with the extremists'.[219] He was, therefore, anxious to secure in advance the support of

the Moderates, the more so in order to assure the British cabinet and Parliament that the scheme would be worked by at least some party in India. This did not prove to be very difficult, for the Moderates were themselves willing to be wooed. They were already feeling uneasy within the Congress, where the Extremists were busy displacing 'these old-stagers', as they called them, from their positions of influence within the organization, or making the pace too hot for those who had managed to survive their iconoclastic fervour. The Moderates realized that in order to save themselves and the reforms—for the Extremists were a threat to both—it was necessary to break away from the Extremists and accept the reforms gracefully. While Montagu was still in India, he had assured himself that the Moderates would support the reforms, secede from the Congress—were, in fact, already doing so—form a party of their own, run their own newspapers, send a deputation to England to support him, and would, in their turn, be supported by the government of India.[220] The fact, however, that the leading Moderates had been taken by Montagu into his confidence and were privy to the formulation of the reform proposals, and the general belief that they had already committed themselves to support them, made them suspect in the eyes of Indian nationalists and added to their unpopularity in the country at large.[221]

When Montagu arrived India in November 1917 the Congress submitted to him and the viceroy a memorandum containing its demands.[222] The memorandum expressed satisfaction and gratitude for the declaration of British policy in India, but hinted at the element of uncertainty as to the future steps and objected to the decision with regard to them being left exclusively to the governments of Great Britain and India. It demanded as assurance that successive steps in the direction of self-government would be taken 'at regular intervals not far removed from one another' and that each instalment of reform would be a 'substantial one'.[223] 'Where is the guarantee, it is asked by Indians who have a painful experience of imperfectly redeemed pledges and half-fulfilled promises, that a great effort may not again be necessary for them to induce a future Government to make the next forward move?'[224] The memorandum suggested that either a section should be inserted in the Government of India Act or a royal proclamation issued making it definite and certain that a steadfast endeavour would be made to reach the appointed goal 'within a reasonable space of time' and that at stated intervals the progress made would be reviewed 'by a competent and impartial authority—say a joint committee of the two Houses of the British Parliament—and the next step taken, the whole journey being completed in about twenty-five years'.[225]

The Congress memorandum demanded for India a position of equality with the dominions in all intra-imperial affairs and pointed out that the events of the last two years had added an element of urgency to this demand, for it had become clear that the dominions would in future have a potent voice in the settlement of imperial problems. If, as some writers suggest, a parliament and (or) a council of the empire should be established with representation therein of the United Kingdom and the dominions, and if all affairs of the empire are to be disposed of by them (it), the present House of Commons and the House of Lords concerning themselves exclusively with the affairs of Britain, 'it is obvious that there will result the governance of India by the Dominions in conjunction with Britain'.[226] The memorandum warned that Indians would offer the most resolute resistance to any such development, for, even if the attitude of the dominions towards India were unexceptionable, Indians could never agree to the widening of the area of subjection. Even if no such far-reaching changes were to take place, the memorandum demanded that India's representatives at the Imperial Conference should be chosen by the elected members of the central and provincial legislatures, instead of being nominated, as they had recently been, by the government of India.[227]

The memorandum affirmed that the claim of Indians for self-government rested 'on more grounds than one. Above and beyond everything is the natural right of every people, inherent and inalienable, to be in their own country what other peoples are in their native lands. It is their birthright, and their very self-respect and the honour of their nation demand its unflinching assertion.'[228] This by itself, the memorandum added, should be an all-sufficient reason with the British people, whose whole history was an inspiration to others aspiring to be free, who had a passionate love for liberty and who were making such sacrifices in the cause of freedom and justice in the present war. The memorandum avowed 'India's fidelity to England', but pointed out that, more than the gratitude for the past and present benefits, it was the hope of achieving self-government with her help which was the secret of that attachment.[229]

Similar sentiments were voiced at the annual session of the Congress at Calcutta towards the end of December 1917. The main demands made at this session were a definition of the term 'responsible government'; the fixing of a time limit for the achievement of complete self-government; the enactment of the Congress-League scheme as the first step; an effective voice for the people of India in the determination of the future steps; and a status of equality for India with the dominions.[230]

The Montagu-Chelmsford report[231] was published in early July 1918. It recommended a 'control experiment' for the introduction of democracy in India. A beginning in responsible government was to be made in the provinces. Provincial government was to be divided into two compartments. Some subjects, finance and law and order in particular, were to be reserved to the control of the governor and his official executive. Other subjects, such as education, agriculture, public health, and local government, were to be transferred to the control of Indian ministers responsible to the elected legislature. Responsible government was to be progressively realized by the transfer of further subjects to ministers as and when it seemed justified in the light of experience. At the centre no comparable advance was contemplated and Indians were frankly told that *'Hanoz Dihli dur ast'* ['Delhi is yet afar off'].[232] All that was proposed was the creation of a central legislature consisting of an assembly and a council of state, the majority of whose members were to be elected. They could debate policy but not determine it.

Reactions in India to the proposals contained in the Montagu-Chelmsford report were along predictable lines.[233] The Extremists were loud in expressing both their disappointment and their condemnation. They contrasted the banality of its conclusions with the benignity of its arguments.[234] The Moderates, who, as M.M. Malaviya had remarked, were 'only too ready to pick up any crumbs that might fall from Mr. Montagu's table',[235] concealed their dissatisfaction, muted their criticism, accepted the proposed reforms in principle, and even gave them 'a measure of superficial applause'.[236] Some of them indulged in the make-believe that they would lead to complete responsible government in India 'in 15 years'.[237]

By the time the Montagu-Chelmsford report was published in early July 1918, the Congress was virtually split. Only the Moderates from Madras and Bihar had remained within the organization.[238] Amongst the prominent Moderates, only Motilal Nehru and Malaviya from the U.P. had refused to defect, the latter saying that 'He would sooner be shot dead than stay away from a body which they had built up during 33 years of suffering, suspicion and persecution.'[239] Malaviya's decision was a great set-back to the Moderates, for he was probably the only Moderate leader with a mass following.

As already decided upon,[240] the Congress met in a special session in Bombay towards the end of August 1918 in order to consider the reform proposals. The Extremists were eager to keep the Moderates with them, if for nothing else than to present a united front to the government. They chose a moderate Muslim Congressman from Bihar—Syed Hasan Imam—who had been a judge of the Calcutta high court, to preside over the session. They postponed the formal opening of the session by a day—from 28 to 29 August—in order to hold informal parleys with certain leading Moderates for a possible compromise which could preserve the unity of the organization, but without success.[241] Finally, holding out an olive branch both to the Moderates and to the government, the Congress at its special session in Bombay moderated its criticism of the reform proposals and its own demands. Instead of rejecting the proposals, as the Moderates alleged it would, the Congress adopted a resolution which said that 'this Congress appreciates the earnest attempt on the part of the Right Hon. the Secretary of State and His Excellency the Viceroy to inaugurate a system of responsible government in India and while it recognises that some of the proposals constitute an advance on the present conditions in some directions it is of opinion that the proposals are disappointing and unsatisfactory'.[242] The resolution went on to suggest certain 'modifications as absolutely necessary to constitute a substantial step towards responsible government'.[243] The Congress demanded a simultaneous advance at the centre, for, as Malaviya put it, 'the Central Government is the heart of the constitution of India',[244] through the introduction of dyarchy: the reserved subjects being foreign affairs, army, navy, and relations with the Indian princely states.[245] The Congress agreed to law, police and justice remaining reserved subjects in the provinces for six years.[246] It also demanded 'the declaration of the rights of the people of India as British citizens'; 'the same measure of fiscal autonomy [for India] which the self-governing Dominions of the Empire possess'; and a statutory guarantee that 'full responsible government should be established in the whole of British India within a period not exceeding fifteen years'.[247]

The Moderates were, however, not appeased. Conscious of their being in a hopeless minority both within the Congress and outside in the country, ruing the day when some of them agreed to re-admit the Extremists in the Congress,[248] exaggerating their differences with the latter,[249] putting the reforms before the party,[250] rejecting private and public appeals for unity by men like Malaviya,[251] and anxious not to displease the British officials, who wanted them to have no truck with the Extremists,[252] most of the leading Moderates had boycotted the special session of the Congress in Bombay, dubbing it an affair of 'the Extremists' and 'the irreconcilables', and decided to hold a separate conference of their own later in the year.[253] As a riposte to the Bombay Congress, which had apparently agreed with Tilak when he said that while Indians had asked for eight annas of self-government the Montagu-Chelmsford scheme had given them only one anna of self-government,[254] S.N. Banerjea moved a resolution in the imperial legislative council, which was adopted on 7 September 1918 by an overwhelming majority of 46 to 2, welcoming the same scheme as 'a genuine effort and a definite advance'.[255] This naturally delighted the British officials and the Anglo-Indians. Chelmsford wrote to Montagu that the Moderates were 'really making a stand this time', though he feared that they had 'no leaders', and he hoped that their efforts would lead to the formation of a constitutional party in India.[256] Willingdon informed the secretary of state on 5 September 1918 that the forthcoming conference of the Moderates was expected to be 'very influential' and if 'these people only put their backs into it, they'll have the Extremists on their backs in 6 months'.[257] The Anglo-Indian *Times of India* of Bombay wrote that 'the Congress ... has served its purpose,

and now that it has got into the hands of a clique and is made to serve the interests of that clique and not of India as a whole, its passing may be witnessed without a tear. In the [proposed] Conference of the Centre Party, we may see the germ of the force which is to take the place of the Congress as the exponent of Indian views'.[258] This was written a few days before the Congress met in a special session in Bombay in late August 1918. Writing after the event in October 1918 and in a more chastened and reflective mood, the same paper said: 'The bulk of their [Extremists'] adherents belong to the younger generation of educated India, and have behind them the restless activity, the dynamic energy and the fiery enthusiasm which belong to youth. They would far prefer, many of them, to discard Western ideals altogether, and are prepared to sacrifice no jot of their convictions in order to co-operate with the Government. Animated by enthusiasm which is often of a lofty type they have as a rule little experience of political life. Rapid decision, uncompromising opinions, fiery zeal—such would seem to be the characteristics of the typical member of the Left or Extreme party. To this the Moderates present a complete contrast. They include those veteran leaders of Congress to whom modern India owes so much: men who have spent their lives working for advance along constitutional lines. Many perhaps have lost the enthusiasm of youth, but if so, they have acquired in its place experience, moderation, so essential to the true statesman. Just because of their caution, their sound judgement, their—it must be admitted—their inferiority in "drive"—they have been for some time prior to their recent resurrection, more or less eclipsed by the Extremists. Without the slightest detriment to their love of India and their devotion to the Motherland, they are hearty supporters of the best ideas of the West. They are willing to co-operate with Government in putting those ideas into practice.'[259]

The first All-India Moderates' Conference met in Bombay on 1 and 2 November 1918. Though it included many distinguished names, it was a small and uncharismatic gathering. The Conference expressed its 'cordial welcome', 'hearty support' and 'grateful appreciation' of the reform scheme 'as constituting a distinct advance on present conditions' and 'a real and substantial step towards the progressive realization of responsible government'. It, however, suggested certain 'necessary modifications and improvements therein'. They were the introduction of the principle of responsibility in the government of India; half the members of the proposed council of state to be elective; the principle of certification by the governor-general to be limited to matters concerning defence, foreign affairs, relations with the Indian princely states, peace and order; half the members of the viceroy's executive council to be Indians; and the grant of fiscal autonomy to India.[260]

S.N. Banerjea, as president of the Conference, described the Moderate Party as 'the friends of evolution and the enemies of revolution'. He called upon his countrymen 'to grasp the [Government's] hand of fellowship' with enthusiasm and to recognize the August declaration as the epitome of Britain's mission in India. He defined the Moderate creed as 'co-operate when we can; criticize when we must'. He spoke of 'the change, the profound change in the spirit and policy of the Government', and remarked that the period of propagandism was over and that of reconstruction had begun. While he appealed to the people to rally to the support of the scheme, he warned the authorities of the grave consequences of any undue delay in the enactment of the reforms or any attempt to whittle them down. 'We have endeavoured', he said, 'to do our duty. The Government must fulfil its part.'[261]

Commenting on the Moderates' Conference, Montagu wrote to Chelmsford on 28 November 1918: 'The Moderates, as you and I know, belong to the old school of politicians.

They have been at the game for the last 30 years and will be ousted by the younger generation, who seem to be all Extremists. In fact the difference between the Moderate and Extremist seems to be very thin. The Moderates perhaps give a measure of superficial applause, but their actual concrete proposals go so far beyond the Report that were it not for the existence of the out and out Home Ruler, they would certainly be called Extremists. In fact Extremists and super-Extremists seem to me to be a more appropriate description of the Indian politicians. I am told that all the students in the country belong to the latter school. They idolise Tilak.'[262] Montagu had feared that his scheme would prove 'much too small for the situation in India.[263] He had originally envisaged full responsible government in the provinces after six years of the inauguration of his reforms.[264] Yielding to more conservative and cautious advice, he had postponed this consummation till the next statutory inquiry.[265] The Montagu-Chelmsford report, however, recommended a further transfer of subjects to the responsible branch of the administration in the provinces at the end of five years.[266] Personally, Montagu had also favoured a simultaneous advance at the centre,[267] but he was made to realize that this would not be allowed by either the home government or the government of India. The lesson which Montagu drew from the first Moderates' Conference was that any reduction in the concessions being made to the Indians in 1918 would mean 'the defection of that Indian support which we now command'.[268]

If the performance of the Moderates at their first conference disappointed Montagu and Chelmsford, their subsequent behaviour in the following weeks and months—their inactivity, vacillations and internal dissensions, flowing, in part, from their failure to muster popular support—further dashed the latter's hopes and expectations of an Indian Moderate party, 'Indian, courageous and strong'.[269] Passing through Bombay, hitherto regarded as the home of stern and unbending Moderates, on his way back from England, Meston wrote to Chelmsford on 19 December 1918: 'There is a good deal of unhappiness here [in Bombay] among the Moderates. They are clearly breaking up. The Secretary of State believed—I do not know if you shared his optimism—that you and he had created a powerful party to support the Reforms Scheme. When I was in England, Mr. Montagu would frequently remind me of the heavy responsibility that lay on us in India for holding this new party together, encouraging and strengthening it. I am much afraid there is disappointment in store for him, for the Moderate enthusiasm is dwindling if not collapsing. There is really no use in blaming us for this, as Mr. Montagu would be inclined to do. The movement was genuine so far as it went, but it was very limited. The newspapers boomed the Moderate Congress in Bombay last month, but it was more impressive on paper than in reality. The Congress now coming on at Delhi will be the real test; if any substantial minority abstain from or contest its proceedings, hope is not yet dead; but there is every prospect of a landslide, and complete success for Malaviya and his friends. The only staunch Moderates here are a small group of oldish men who were very early adherents of the Congress, and feel that they have achieved the original purpose of the Congress. They are an attenuated band, and count for very little as a fighting force. The other side have got all the organisation and all the popularity.'[270]

When the Congress met in a large and impressive gathering in December 1918 at Delhi under the presidentship of M.M. Malaviya, the war had ended. It reiterated the demands made at the special session at Bombay four months earlier and in one respect went even further. Yielding to the pressure of public opinion, which was 'far more potent [in 1918] than even a year ago',[271] the Congress urged that full responsible governmcnt be granted to the provinces at

the very outset. The pronouncements of President Wilson and Lloyd George about self-determination had added another weapon to the armoury of Indian nationalists. The Congress demanded that the principle of self-determination should be applied to India also, and that, as the first step towards the practical application of that principle, the British Parliament should pass an act 'which will establish at an early date complete Responsible Government in India', and 'when complete Responsible Government shall be thus established, the final authority in all internal affairs shall be the Supreme Legislative Assembly as voicing the will of the Indian Nation'. The Congress further resolved 'that in the reconstruction of Imperial polity, whether in matters affecting the inner relations of the nations constituting it, in questions of foreign policy or in the League of Nations, India shall be accorded the same position as the self-governing Dominions'. The Congress also urged that 'in justice to India, it should be represented ... to the same extent as the self-governing Dominions' by elected representatives.[272]

Once again, ignoring private and public appeals by men like Malaviya,[273] the leading Moderates kept away from the Delhi Congress. A few stray Moderates who attended the Delhi Congress—as they had done at Bombay also earlier in the year—did so mainly in order to dissuade the Congress from going beyond the resolutions passed at the special session. With no prospect of the Moderates returning to the Congress fold and the split in the organization becoming a sad reality, Congressmen no longer felt inhibited and bound by the resolutions of the special session. Several speakers at the Congress referred to the Moderates as persons 'who have one foot in the Government House ... and their other foot in public politics', 'who are waiting in the antechambers of the government Secretariat', but were 'trying to effect a compromise of our attitude on the burning questions of the day irrespective of what the people generally feel on the matter', and to 'prevent us from going forward at all'.[274] References were also made to the 'ill-timed and unfortunate' Rowlatt report, and to the banning of the procession of the Congress president in Delhi as evidence to prove that the British bureaucracy in India had not changed.[275]

On 5 March 1919 the government of India wrote to the secretary of state that the Moderates represented 'the ablest and most respected Indian opinion'.[276] 'Ablest' it certainly was, but it is doubtful if it was the 'most respected'. The Moderates were men of political wisdom and experience. They stood for circumspection, balance, sense and ordered progress. But they were no longer the type from which Indian public opinion was busy choosing its popular idols. *The Times,* 19 August 1918, had suggested that meeting in a conference was not enough, the Moderates must 'bestir themselves' and, if they wished for political power, 'they must struggle against their opponents'.[277] Energy, activity and fighting quality were not, however, the strong points of the Moderates. At best they could sail in fair weather with the wind provided by a generous and liberal government. But the post-war weather in India was by no means fair and the government of India's primary task of governing had not in any way been lightened by doing what they considered to be the maximum possible in the direction of reforms. Scarcity, high prices, a devastating influenza epidemic, Muslim uneasiness about Turkey and the Khilafat, and the slow process of law-making at Westminster were hardly conducive to the growth of moderation in India. The passage of the Rowlatt Act, despite protests by the Moderates, exposed their position and shook their prestige. While official opinion lamented that the Moderates lacked backbone and had failed the very first 'test', the Moderates felt that the ground was being cut from underneath their feet by the unwisdom of the government. And then in April 1919 came the Amritsar massacre which put the reforms and the Moderates into the dark shade from which they never emerged.

Reference Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. S.R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi, 1971; New York, 1972).
2. J. LaPalombara and M. Weiner, 'The Origin and Development of Political Parties', in J. LaPalombara and M. Weiner (eds.), *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton, 1966), p. 21.
3. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* p. 295.
4. Supplement to *Theosophist,* January 1887, p. liv. But a year earlier Oleott was reported to have thus spoken slightingly of the Indian National Congress: 'The present Congress [i.e. the 1885 Theosophieal Convention at Adyar] was a far higher and nobler thing than the politieal Congress in Bombay, whieh was now sitting, for here they were met to improve humanity.' See *ibid.,* January 1886, p. lxxxvii.
5. See *Times of India,* 6 Mareh 1888.
6. See *Indian Mirror,* 21, 26 May 1889.
7. See Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 390-2.
8. *Bengalee,* 10 September 1887; also 10 April, 23 June, 25 Deeember 1888; 8 June, 6 July 1889.
9. *Tribune,* 7 July 1888.
10. *Vaidarbha,* quoted in *Hindu,* 29 Deeember 1897.
11. See on this point, *Hindu,* 16 March 1888.
12. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* p. 168.
13. *Ibid.,* pp. 365-6.
14. *Ibid.,* pp. 201-3.
15. In 1883, C.P. Ilbert, the law member of the governor-general's eouneil, introdueed a bill to remove judieial disqualifieations based on race distinetions. It was vehemently opposed by the British eommunity in India and had substantially to be withdrawn. See *ibid.,* pp. 336-53.
16. *Ibid.,* pp. 366-7.
17. *Ibid.,* pp. 407-9.
18. *Ibid.,* p. 409.
19. *Ibid.,* pp. 318-19. Also, for example, the annual meetings in Britain of the Social Seience Assoeiation, the British Assoeiation for the Cultivation of Seienee, the National Liberal Federation, the National Union of Conservatives, and the Trades Union Congress.
20. See below, pp. 8-9.
21. A.O. Hume, 'The Late Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee. In Memoriam', *India,* 27 July 1906. The *Leader* wrote on 4 August 1912: 'Among Indian Congressmen Mr. Bonnerjee was the

dearest friend to Mr. Hume. Sir Pherozeshah called Mr. Bonnerjee Mr. Hume's eldest son.' For Mehta's remark about Bonnerjee, see *Report of the Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1892,* p. 6. See also *Tribune,* 28 July 1906.

22. See W.C. Bonnerjee's piece in 'A Call to Arms', III, *Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar,* December 1903, p. 478.
23. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* chapters vi-vii, *passim.*
24. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. 10.
25. In June 1879 the then viceroy, Lord Lytton, abolished the department of revenue, agriculture and commerce mainly in order to get rid of its 'very troublesome Secretary', Hume. Hume was demoted and sent back to the North-Western Provinces as a member of the board of revenue. See Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* p. 310.
26. *Ibid.,* pp. 311-12; also Hume's note, 20 August 1872, on the Bengal Municipalities Bill, 1872, in Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce Department Proceedings, Municipalities, A, February 1873, K.-W., nos. 8-13, NAI.
27. 'I never had a son; this though I have carefully hid it for my dear old wife's sake, has been a great grief to me, and has altered the whole course of my life ....' Hume to Dufferin, 28 October 1886, Dufferin Papers. Interestingly, Hume wrote to Naoroji from Madras on 12 December 1887: 'I arrived [here] on the 30th of Nov. to look after my children and my special pet child the Congress.' Naoroji Papers (hereafter NP).
28. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 312-13. Hume's interest in vegetarianism, inspired by the writings of Anna Kingsford, seems to have been independent of his interest in theosophy. See *Autobiography of Alfred Percy Sinnett* (London, 1986), p. 20.
29. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* chapters vi-vii, *passim.*
30. Quoted in W. Wedderburn, *Allan Octavian Hume,* C.B. (London, 1913), pp. 63-4.
31. See Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 316-17.
32. *Hindu,* 14 August 1896.
33. Maurice Duverger, *Political Parties* (London, 1964, translated from the French by Barbara and Robert North), p. xxiii.
34. Hume to Chiplonkar, 16 November 1884, Chiplonkar Papers. Hume must have written dozens of such letters to various persons, but most of Hume's papers—even those with the help of which Wedderburn wrote his biography in 1913—have been lost.
35. *Times of India,* 29 August 1883.
36. Ripon to Gladstone, 25 June 1884, Ripon Papers; Ripon to Kimberley, 3 July 1884, *ibid.* See also H.W. Primrose, private secretary to Ripon, to Arthur Godley, permanent under-secretary at the India Office, 12 May 1884, 4 February 1885, Kilbracken Papers.
37. Ripon to Kimberley, 19 July 1883, Ripon Papers.
38. *Indian Spectator,* 9 September 1883.
39. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 383, 386.
40. Dufferin to Reay, 17 May 1885, Dufferin Papers.
41. Hume to Ripon, 13 January 1889, Ripon Papers. Hume's letter was in reply to Ripon's of 15 December 1888 *(ibid.),* in which the latter had written that Dufferin's speech at the St Andrew's Day dinner, Calcutta, 30 November 1888, attacking the Congress had 'startled' him. When, in 1905, following the publication of A.C. Lyall's biography of Dufferin,

doubts were expressed in certain quarters over the late viceroy's alleged acquiescence in the project of the Congress in 1885, W.C. Bonnerjee secured from Hume a public confirmation of the matter. See Bonnerjee's letter to editor, *Hindu,* 19 June 1905.

42. In August 1886 Dufferin told the Brahmo leader, P.C. Mozoomdar: 'Remember I am an Irishman. And is it possible for me not to sympathize with the aspirations of a nation so similarly circumstanced as my own?' See 'Six Months at Simla', *Interpreter,* December 1886, p. 123.
43. See *Further Correspondence respecting Reorganization in Egypt, Parliamentary Papers,* 1883, vol. lxxxiii, C. 3529, pp. 25-6, 41-3, 47-50, 83, 88-91, and *Despatch from Lord Dufferin, Forwarding the Decree Creating New Political Institutions for Egypt, ibid.,* C. 3733, pp. 2-11.
44. In a speech at Bolton in late August 1885, even Lord Ripon admitted that 'the Russian advance and ... the early probability of its extension ... formed a most important consideration in the determination of my policy ..., above all, in my constant desire to promote to the utmost of my power the attachment of the Natives of India to British rule'. *Indian Mirror,* 26 September 1885. It may be relevant to point out that in the winter of 1885-6 the British army in northern India was engaged upon its biggest ever military manoeuvres. See A.C. Lyall, *The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava* (London, 1905), vol. ii, pp. 112-13. Interestingly, Reay wrote to R. Churchill on 1 January 1886: 'Whilst we are preparing for this military display, the Natives have held their political winter manoeuvres, under the aegis of Mr. [A.] O. Hume.' Reay to Churchill, 1 January 1886, R. Churchill Papers.
45. *Vaidarbha,* quoted in *Hindu,* 29 December 1897.
46. [G.A. Natesan (ed.)], *Indian Politics* (Madras 1898), pp. vii-viii. There is a certain incongruity in the idea of politicians meeting to discuss social matters. Moreover, politicians are bound to discuss politics even when they meet 'socially'.
47. See *Hindu,* 4 December 1884, for Malabari's project of an all-India social reform association.
48. *Indian Mirror,* 23 October 1885.
49. Hume, 'Prospects and Methods of National Reform', *Indian Spectator,* 1 February 1885; see also Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* pp. 148-62; Hume to B. Tyabji, 13 September 1888, Tyabji Papers.
50. Hume to Dufferin,? February 1885, Dufferin Papers.
51. Dufferin to Hume, 17 February 1885, *ibid.*
52. 'This is the second long interview I have had with [His Excellency]....' Private and confidential circular from Hume to the 'Inner Circle or Select Committee', encl. Hume to Dufferin, 12 June 1885, *ibid.*
53. These were later made public in a resolution (Home Department, no. 35/1616-26, dated 8 October 1886) which said that the government of India 'considers that interference by the State is undesirable, and that the reforms advocated by Mr. Malabari ... must be left to the improving influence of time and to the gradual operation of the mental and moral development of the people by the spread of education'. See Supplement to *Gazette of India,* 9 October 1886, pp. 1365-7. For Hume's defence of the government's attitude, see Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* pp. 163-7, *Indian Spectator,* 24 October 1886, and *Tribune,* 6 November 1886.

54. Hume's correspondence with S.H. Chiplonkar and B.M. Malabari in late 1884 and early 1885 shows how anxious he was that the controversy then raging over the question of state interference in social matters should not further divide his Indian friends. See Hume to Chiplonkar, 27 November 1884, 12 February 1885, Chiplonkar Papers; and Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* pp. 148-62. On 5 March 1891, Hume wrote to Lansdowne that he had 'ever kept social questions out of the Congress as such', because of the fear of a 'social split' and its attendant evils. Lansdowne Papers. See also Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* p. 108, and *Indian Social Reformer,* 16 October 1898.
55. Hume to Dufferin, 31 May 1885, Dufferin Papers; also Hume to Dufferin, 12 June 1885, 26 October 1887, *ibid.*
56. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 3. This was originally published in 1886 from Bombay under the title *Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885.*
57. *The Times,* 22 June 1885.
58. *Indian Mirror,* 17 June 1885.
59. *Times of India,* 14 July 1885.
60. *Statesman and Friend of India,* 4 November 1885. Bright was obviously referring to Hume when he said at Birmingham on 5 November 1885: 'I met not long ago a gentleman who had been more than 30 years in India. He had been in the Civil Service. I have never met with a man—and I have met with scores and conversed with them—who appeared to know so much about all parts of India, and about all Europeans there, with a great acquaintance with the natives also, over whom he had been called to act.' *Times of India,* 25 November 1885. See also *Christian World,* 29 October 1885.
61. Hume was introduced to J. Chamberlain by Ripon. See Chamberlain to Ripon, 5 October 1885, Ripon Papers. Chamberlain told Hume that 'no public man [in Britain] now can possibly look a week ahead. Enough for the day is the evil thereof.' Hume reacted by saying 'that in this case no public man could claim to be in any sense a statesman'. Hume to Dufferin, 13 August 1886, Dufferin Papers.
62. Morley obviously remembered this when in 1907 he wrote to Hume: 'I know well your historic place in the evolution of Indian policy.' Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* p. 49.
63. See note 119 below.
64. *Statesman and Friend of India,* 4 November 1885. The correspondent was R.D. Osborn.
65. *Standard,* 4 September 1885. The letter was also carried by *Evening Standard,* 4 September 1885.
66. W. Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* pp. 55-7.
67. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* p. 404. The leaflets were written by Wedderburn, Crawley Boevey, Telang, J. Umiashankar, Wacha and others. See Wacha to Naoroji, 21 June 1895, NP. Interestingly, the idea of sending a deputation to England was suggested to Indians by, among others, R. Churchill during his visit to India in the winter of 1884-5. See *Bombay Gazette,* 10 January 1885, and J. Fergusson to Churchill, 10 January 1885, R. Churchill Papers.
68. See *Pall Mall Gazette,* 8 December 1885.
69. See letter of Chandavarkar to Bombay Presidency Association, reproduced in *Indian Mirror,* 20 November 1885.
70. *Voice of India,* December 1885.

71. *Indian Mirror,* 6 December 1885.
72. *Indian Spectator,* 6 December 1885.
73. Quoted in *Englishman,* 28 December 1885.
74. See *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 3.
75. *Times of India,* 3 December 1885.
76. Except for the following casual comment in *Indian Mirror,* 16 October 1885: 'It is proposed ... to hold either at Puna or Jubbulpore a Conference of the National Indian Union, which represents all the Presidencies and Provinces of the Empire. It is this last Association, composed of the leading men of all Provinces, that sends telegrams to the English journals regarding Indian affairs ... We doubt whether the proposed Conference of the National Indian Union at Puna or Jubbulpore can be held at all this year. But we hope that in the present circumstances of India a strong effort will be made to hold it, as it will take the place of the National Assembly which we have ourselves so often advocated, and which, in Indian interests, was never more necessary than at the present critical juncture of our affairs.'
77. *Bengalee,* 12 December 1885; *Hindu,* 28 November 1885; *Native Opinion,* 20 December 1885; *Tribune,* 12 December 1885; Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 406-7.
78. S.N. Banerjea, *A Nation in Making* (London, 1925), pp. 98-9. The *Indian Mirror,* 22 May 1890, wrote that when the Congress first met in Bombay in December 1885 few had any idea that it would become so powerful in a few years. 'Even Babu Surendra Nath Banerji kept away from the Congress, thinking that his Bengal Provincial Conference was a movement of a weightier kind.'
79. See, for example, B.C. Pal, *Indian Nationalism: Its Principles and Personalities* (Madras, 1918), pp. 97-8.
80. *Hindu,* 5 December 1885. J.N. Ghosal remarked at the Congress on 29 December 1885 that 'it is not yet a month since the time and place of this Congress were fixed and notified'. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* pp. 20-1.
81. *Indu Prakash,* 7 December 1885.
82. See *Hindu,* 12 December 1885, and *Indian Mirror,* 18 December 1885.
83. Quoted in J.C. Bagal, *History of the Indian Association 1876-1951* (Calcutta, 1953), p. 81.
84. See Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 408-10.
85. *Indian Mirror,* 18 December 1885.
86. Naoroji to B.M. Malabari, 24 December 1885; also Naoroji to J. Umiashankar, 24 December 1885, NP. S.H. Chiplonkar, secretary of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, did not know of the change of venue when on the morning of 24 December 1885 he wrote to R. Churchill from Thana: 'I go to Poona by the afternoon train, as it is proposed to hold a National Conference there during Xmas. ... In this Conference we propose to fix upon some common definite programme of reform for a combined agitation.' Chiplonkar to Churchill, 24 December 1885, R. Churchill Papers.
87. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 4.
88. *Bombay Gazette,* 29 December 1885.
89. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* pp. 3-4.
90. *Ibid.,* p. 7. The reasons given by Bonnerjee for the presence of only three Bengalis at the first Congress were no mere excuses. On 15 December 1885 Wedderburn had informed

Chiplonkar that '15 have promised [to attend the forthcoming Congress] from Madras, 7 from Bengal'. See Wedderburn to S.H. Chiplonkar, 15 December 1885, Chiplonkar Papers.

91. The name of J. Ghosal, editor of the *Indian Union,* who represented Allahabad, is missing from the list of the representatives given in *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* pp. 4-5, though he is found taking part in the proceedings of the Congress. See also *Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 9.
92. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 5.
93. *Ibid.,* p. 4.
94. *Ibid.,* pp. 28, 29, 37-8.
95. *Ibid.,* p. 7. Though Hume is listed on p. 4 of the *Report* as a delegate or 'representative' from Simla, while proposing the election of Bonnerjee he does so on behalf of Bengal.
96. It is interesting that Bonnerjee should have first emphasized the social aspect of the Congress.
97. While the detailed *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885* (p. 8), has only 'social questions', the brief report of the proceedings of the first Congress supplied to the press at the time (see, for example, *Bombay Gazette,* 29 December 1885) speaks of 'political (and social) questions'. The discrepancy is indicative of the uncertainty which still prevailed at the highest level over the inclusion of social questions.
98. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 8.
99. *Ibid.*
100. The description is W.C. Bonnerjee's. See *ibid.,* p. 7.
101. *Reis and Rayyet,* 16 January 1886.
102. The correspondent might well have been Girija Bhusan Mookerjee, pleader and editor of the *Navavibhakar,* who was one of the three delegates from Calcutta.
103. *Reis and Rayyet,* 16 January 1886.
104. *Ibid.*
105. *Ibid.,* 30 January 1886.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.* About the Madras delegates, the *Tribune,* 16 January 1886, wrote: 'Madras sent the greatest number of delegates, all of good education and high social standing. They completely enchanted the audience with their liberal views and impressive eloquence. Clad in conservative Hindu garments, with their shining foreheads rubbed with sandal after the orthodox Hindu fashion, and speaking in eloquent English about the various ways in which India should improve her political status, they exhibited a spectacle at once charming and instructive; charming inasmuch as it was a glorious sight to behold genuine Hindus (preserving intact ancient customs of their great race) holding the most radical views about politics; instructive inasmuch as it was capable of infusing a belief that India could improve, to the highest extent desirable, its political status without becoming *Anglicised.*'
108. *Reis and Rayyet,* 30 January 1886. Being a government official, Wedderburn had to remain in the background, but his role in organizing the first Congress was second only to Hume's.
109. Baij Nath, 'Three Modern Indian Reformers', *East & West,* March 1913, p. 226.
110. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 59.
111. *Ibid.,* p. 7. On his return journey to Calcuttà after the Congress, Bonnerjee found himself travelling in the same railway compartment as the famous Russian traveller, I.P. Minayeff. When asked by the latter 'what practical results they expected from the conference',

Bonnerjee replied: 'Growth of national feeling and unity of Indians.' See Minayeff, *Travels in and Diaries of India and Burma* (translated into English by Hitendranath Sanyal and others, Calcutta, n.d.), p. 120.

112. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 9.
113. *Indu Prakash,* 28 December 1885.
114. *Indian Spectator,* 3 January 1886.
115. *Indian Mirror,* 5 January 1886. Speaking at the annual dinner of the Calcutta Trade Association, 30 January, 1885, the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, Rivers Thompson, had remarked: 'We are dealing ... with a vast area and a vast people of many tribes, and tongues, and creeds. It is ethnologically impossible and historically improbable that any effort or will could ever weld these into one nation ....' *Englishman,* 31 January 1885. The *St. James's Gazette,* 8 December 1885, had written: 'There is no nation, nor germ of national life yet discernible in the great peninsula. Whether in the course of ages such a spirit may at last be slowly created amongst those numerous populations, differing in race, creed, traditions, and qualities from each other far more than the races of Europe amongst themselves, is more than doubtful.'
116. *Hindoo Patriot,* 11 January 1886.
117. *Hindu,* 7 January 1886.
118. Quoted in *Indian Mirror,* 17 January 1886.
119. Florence Nightingale to W. Wedderburn, 27 November 1885, Florence Nightingale Papers. See also her letter, dated 27 August 1888, to Naoroji, NP.
120. C.P. Ilbert to James Bryce, 14 March 1886, Bryce Papers.
121. John Slagg, 'The National Indian Congress', *Nineteenth Century,* May 1886, p. 710.
122. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* pp. 8-9.
123. *Ibid.,* pp. 10-11.
124. *Ibid.,* p. 11.
125. *Ibid.,* pp. 11-12.
126. *Ibid.,* pp. 12-15.
127. *Ibid.,* p. 15.
128. Ripon to Hughes, 8 December 1882, Ripon Papers.
129. Ripon to Bright, 11 March 1884, *ibid.*
130. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* pp. 18, 20.
131. *Ibid.,* p. 16.
132. *Ibid.,* p. 18.
133. *Ibid.*
134. *Ibid.,* p. 19.
135. *Ibid.*
136. *Ibid.*
137. *Ibid.,* p. 21.
138. *Ibid.,* p. 22. M.G. Ranade also expressed a similar fear, though in another context. *Ibid.,* p. 28.
139. *Ibid.*
140. *Ibid.*
141. *Ibid.,* p. 23.
142. *Ibid.*

143. *Ibid.,* pp. 23-4.
144. *Ibid.,* p. 24.
145. *Ibid.,* p. 25.
146. *Ibid.,* pp. 25-6.
147. *Ibid.,* pp. 26-7.
148. *Ibid.,* p. 27.
149. *Ibid.*
150. *Ibid.,* p. 28.
151. *Ibid.*
152. *Ibid.*
153. *Ibid.*
154. *Ibid.*
155. *Ibid.,* p. 29.
156. *Ibid.,* pp. 29-30.
157. *Ibid.,* p. 31.
158. *Ibid.*
159. *Ibid.,* pp. 31-2.
160. *Ibid.,* p. 32.
161. *Ibid.,* pp. 32-3.
162. *Ibid.,* p. 33.
163. See Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 368-70.
164. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 35.
165. *Ibid.,* p. 33.
166. *Ibid.,* pp. 33-4.
167. *Ibid.*
168. *Ibid.,* pp. 34-5.
169. *Ibid.,* p. 35.
170. *Ibid.*
171. *Ibid.,* p. 36.
172. *Ibid.,* p. 37.
173. *Ibid.,* p. 38.
174. *Ibid.,* p. 39.
175. *Ibid.*
176. *Ibid.,* p. 40.
177. *Ibid.* The president, Bonnerjee, thought the country at large would not accept residence in England as a compulsory measure, but the Congress might accept it as a provisional compromise for the present. *Ibid.,* p. 41.
178. *Ibid.,* p. 41.
179. *Ibid.,* p. 42.
180. *Ibid.,* p. 41.
181. *Ibid.,* p. 42.
182. *Ibid.,* pp. 42-8.
183. *Ibid.,* pp. 49-50. From late 1884 on, when Afghan developments indicated the need for expanding the Volunteer Corps, there was a vigorous popular and press demand that able Indians of birth and education who wished to serve their country should be allowed to join the Corps like Europeans and Eurasians.

184. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
185. *Ibid.*
186. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
187. *Ibid.*, p. 51-2.
188. *Ibid.*
189. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-4.
190. *Ibid.*, pp. 54-7.
191. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
192. *Ibid.*
193. *Ibid.*
194. *Ibid.*
195. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
196. See on this point, S.R. Mehrotra, 'The Development of the Indian Outlook on World Affairs before 1947', *Journal of Development Studies,* April 1965, p. 277.
197. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* pp. 57-8.
198. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
199. *Ibid.*
200. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.
201. *Indian Spectator,* 3 January 1886; also letter of K.T. Telang, dated 9 March 1886, to editor, *The Times,* in *Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* Appendix D, pp. 163-4. W.C. Bonnerjee later claimed that 'it was to a great extent on my advocacy that the Congress leaders agreed to leave out social questions from the movement and make it a purely political one'. 'A Call to Arms', III, *Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar,* December 1903, p. 478.
202. Ripon to Gladstone, 25 June 1884, Ripon Papers. See also Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 371-2.
203. For example, on 15 December 1884, Dufferin wrote to Kimberley, secretary of state for India: 'No Viceroy probably has left India amidst such general and genuine expressions of goodwill on the part of the Indian population; and I am glad to find that I shall have no difficulty in following the general lines of his policy.' Dufferin Papers.
204. *The Annual Register,* 1886, p. 181, quoted in N. Mansergh, *The Irish Question 1840-1921* (London, 1965), p. 144. See also P. Smith (ed.), *Lord Salisbury on Politics* (London, 1972), pp. 55-7, and note 216 below.
205. Dufferin to Kimberley, 14 May 1885, Dufferin Papers.
206. See, for example, Dufferin to Kimberley, 21 March, 6, 26 April and 17 May 1886; Dufferin to Cross, 13 August 1886, 4 January, 20 March and 9 May 1887, *ibid.;* also Dufferin to Charles Bradlaugh, 7 and 22 February 1889; *Reformer,* 15 July 1904; *India,* 15, 22 July 1904.
207. Kimberley to Dufferin, 19 March 1886, Dufferin Papers.
208. Hume to Dufferin, 9 October 1887, *ibid.*
209. Lord Sailisbury, cited in W.S. Churchill, *Lord Randolph Churchill* (London, 1906), vol. ii, pp. 116-17.
210. The description is Dufferin's. See Dufferin to Kimberley, 13 August 1886, Dufferin Papers.
211. See Dufferin to Kimberley, 21 March, 6, 26 April 1886, *ibid.* Speaking in the imperial legislative council on 4 January 1886, Dufferin appreciated the stand of the Bombay

Congress on the extension of the license tax and referred to it as 'no less intelligent a body than the Congress of Indian delegates lately held at Bombay'. *Abstract of the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor-General of India, 1886,* p. 27.

212. Kimberley to Dufferin, 22 April 1886, Dufferin Papers.
213. Dufferin to Cross, 4, 18 January, 1 February 1887, *ibid.;* also S. Gopal, *British Policy in India 1858-1905* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 166-7.
214. Cross to Dufferin, 3 February 1887, Dufferin Papers; also Gopal, *op. cit.,* p. 167; S.R. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth 1885-1929* (London, 1965), pp. 27, 29. Cross was also echoing the views of Lord Salisbury, the prime minister, who was far more opposed to the introduction of the elective principle in India. See Gwendolen Cecil, *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury* (London, 1921-32), vol. iv, pp. 193-201; 342 H.L. Deb. 3s., cols. 98-100.
215. Dispatch of the Government of India, Home Department, Public, No. 67 of 1888, dated 6 November 1888, Public Letters from India, 1888, vol. 9, pp. 171-203, IOR. See also Dufferin to Cross, 20 October, 11 November 1888, Dufferin Papers.
216. Cross to Dufferin, 21 December 1888; Cross to Lansdowne, 28 November, 7 December 1888, 3, 18, 25, 30 January 1889, Cross Papers.
217. The Indian Councils Act of 1892 (55 & 56 Vict. c. 14) increased the number of additional members in the governor-general's council, that is to say, the number of members added to the executive council of the governor-general when it went into legislative session, from a maximum of twelve to a maximum of sixteen, and that in the governors' councils from a maximum of eight to a maximum of twenty. All the additional members were still nominated, but the regulations framed under the Act allowed the non-official members of the provincial councils to make recommendations for four seats in the governor-general's council, and the municipalties, district boards, chambers of commerce and universities to make recommendations for eight seats in the provincial councils. The provincial councils, though not the governor-general's council, were empowered to discuss the budget and raise administrative questions, though not to vote on them.
218. C.P. Ilbert to James Bryce, 24 July 1886, Bryce Papers.
219. See, for example, Dufferin to Kimberley, 14 June 1886, and Dufferin's memo. dated 7 August 1886 on the subject, Dufferin Papers.
220. Dufferin to Hume, 27 October 1886; also Dufferin to Hume, 28 August, 25 September 1886, *ibid.*
221. Dufferin to A. MacDonnell (telegram), 2 November 1886, *ibid.*
222. See, for example, Hume to Dufferin, 26 September, 9 October 1887, and Dufferin to Hume, 8 October 1887, *ibid.*
223. See, particularly, Colvin to Dufferin, 26 November 1888, *ibid.*
224. *Statesman,* 1 December 1888; also D.M. Wallace (ed.), *Speeches Delivered in India 1884-8, by the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava* (London, 1890), pp. 229-48.
225. Hume's letter to editor, dated 6 November 1888, *Indian Mirror,* 11 November 1888.
226. Dispatch of the Government of India, Home Department, Public, No. 67 of 1888, vol. 9, pp. 171-203, IOR. See also Dufferin to Cross, 20 October and 11 November 1888, Cross Papers.
227. *Indian Mirror,* 8 April 1886. In 1887 Hume also organized an Indian National Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta.

228. [A.O. Hume,] *The Old Man's Hope. A Tract for the Times* (Calcutta, 1886).
229. [A.O. Hume,] *The Rising Tide: or, the Progress of Political Activity in India* (Calcutta, 1886).
230. See Dufferin to Hume, 18 June 1886, June 1886 (though written these letters were not sent); D.M. Wallace to Hume, 26 June 1886; Hume to Dufferin,? June 1886, Dufferin Papers.
231. [A.O. Hume,] *The Star in the East; or, the Bengal National League* (Calcutta, 1886).
232. A.S.Rajam, *The National Congress: Its Evolution* (Madras, 1918), pp. 43-4.
233. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* pp. 1-8.
234. *Ibid.,* p. 17; also *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 14. According to some knowledgeable sources, the exclusion of the press from the second Congress, like the first one, was deliberate and was prompted by the fear that the speakers, being untested, might 'give utterance to indiscreet sentiments and unguarded expressions'. See *Bombay Gazette,* cited in *Indian Mirror,* 6 January 1887; *Indian Spectator,* cited in *Indian Mirror,* 16 January 1887, and *Hindu,* cited in *Indian Mirror,* 11 December 1887. Both the press and the public were invited to the third Congress at Madras in 1887.
235. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* p. 47.
236. *Ibid.,* pp. 50-1.
237. *Ibid.,* p. 51.
238. *Ibid.,* pp. 62-7.
239. See, for example, *Indian Mirror,* 7 January 1887.
240. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* pp. 41-4.
241. *Ibid.,* pp. 33-4.
242. See, for example, *Indian Mirror,* 7, 12 January 1887 and *Hindu,* 24 January 1887.
243. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* p. 39.
244. *Statesman,* 18 December 1886; also reproduced in *Hindu,* 12 January 1887.
245. Amir Ali to secretaries, Indian National Congress, 12 December 1886, and Abdul Latif to same, 22 December 1886, encl. private secretary, viceroy, to private secretary, secretary of state, 21 and 28 December 1886, Dufferin Papers.
246. *Aligarh Institute Gazette,* 23 November 1886.
247. See, for example, Northbrook to Dufferin, 14 January and 28 May 1886, Dufferin Papers.
248. Resolution XIII, *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. lxii.
249. B.N. Chunder, *The Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India* (Calcutta, 1869), vol. i. p. 388.
250. *Ibid.,* vol. ii, p. 386.
251. See Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 253-7.
252. Resolution of government of India, 15 July 1885, *Selections from the Records of the Government of India, Home Department,* No. CCV, p. 389.
253. See, for example, *Sir Syed Ahmed on the Present State of Indian Politics* (Allahabad, 1888), *passim, Sir Syed Ahmed on the Mahomedans and the National Congress* (Allahabad, 1888), *passim,* and *Showing the Seditious Character of the Indian National Congress ...* (Allahabad, 1888), *passim.*
254. B. Tyabji to A.O. Hume, 27 October 1888, quoted in M.R. Palande (ed.), *Source Material for a History of the Freedom Movement in India* (Bombay, 1958), vol. ii, pp. 80-2.
255. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 15 December 1887.

256. The pamphlet entitled *Democracy Not Suited to India* (Allahabad, 1888), which was published under the name of Udai Pratap Singh, the Raja of Bhinga, was in fact written by Arthur Strachey. See A. Colvin to Dufferin, 27 August 1888, Dufferin Papers, and T. Beck to his mother, 28 May 1888, Beck Papers. Arthur Strachey, son of Sir John Strachey, later became judge of the Bombay high court (1895-9) and chief justice of the Allahabad high court (1899-1901). He gained notoriety in 1897, when he convicted B.G. Tilak of 'disaffection' by defining it as 'simply the lack of affection'.
257. See T. Beck to his mother, 28 May, 7 June, 11, 15 August, 4, 9 September 1888. Beck Papers. The papers of Theodore Beck, consisting mainly of his letters to his mother during 1884-93, which have recently been acquired by the India Office Library, London, provide ample evidence in regard to his stiffening of Syed Ahmed against the Congress, his easy access to the highest British officials, his intense antipathy to the Bengalis, his distrust of democracy both in England and in India, his hatred for Gladstone and his policies, and his prominent role in promoting, with official backing, 'an Anglo-Musalman alliance and an aristocratic opposition to the Congress'.
258. For Beck see *ibid.* and his *Topics of the Day* (Allahabad, 1888), *passim;* for Lepel Griffin see *Indian Mirror,* 22 December 1887.
259. Of the 1887 Congress held at Madras, Hume said with pardonable exaggeration that 'the country had virtually taken the movement out of the hands of the original promoters, and ... made the enterprise their own'. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 9.
260. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* 'Introduction', p. 1.
261. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* Appendix II, pp. 199-204. This was written by M. Viraraghava Chariar of Madras.
262. *Ibid.,* Appendix III, pp. 205-14. This was written by Hume.
263. See *Audi Alteram Partem, Being Two Letters on Certain Aspects of the Indian National Congress Movement* (Simla, 1888), pp. 1-20.
264. Colvin to Dufferin, 3 December 1888, Dufferin Papers.
265. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 78.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* p. 10.
2. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885;* p. 3.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* p. 407.
6. See, for example, *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 2, *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* pp. iii, xxxix, 4, and Hume, *A Speech on the Indian National Congress: Its Origin, Aims and Objects, Delivered at Allahabad, 30th April, 1888* (Calcutta, 1888), pp. 1, 2, 3, 6, 13, 14, 16.
7. See, for example, *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* pp. 4-8, and Hume, *A Speech on the Indian National Congress,* pp. 2, 3, 4, 16.
8. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 58.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 3.

10. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* pp. 163-4.
11. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 181.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Report of the Ninth Indian National Congress ..., 1893,* p. 8; also *Hindu,* 4 January 1894, and *Tribune,* 21 December 1895.
16. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 181.
17. *Ibid.*
18. The first Congress was originally scheduled to meet at Poona in December 1885 *(Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 3). In 1889 it was resolved that the next Congress should 'assemble at some city in Bengal, the exact place to be fixed hereafter' *(Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* p. 68). In 1892 it was decided that the next Congress should be held at Amritsar *(Report of the Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1892,* p. 116). In 1901 it was resolved that the next Congress should 'assemble after Christmas, 1902, on such day and place in the Bombay Presidency as may be later determined upon' *(Report of the Seventeenth Indian National Congress ..., 1901,* p. 9). Similarly in 1913 it was resolved that 'the Congress of the year 1914 be held in the Province of Madras' *(Report of the Twenty-Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1913,* p. 115).
19. See, for example, encl. Hume to Dufferin, 12 June 1885, Dufferin Papers.
20. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* p. 111.
21. *Ibid.*
22. In December 1887 we get the following 'List of Existing Congress Committees': 1. The Calcutta Committee (For Lower Bengal, Assam and Orissa); 2. The Bankipore Committee (For Behar); 3. The Benares Committee (For the Benares Division); 4. The Allahabad Committee (For the Doab and Bundelkhund); 5. The Lucknow Committee (For Oudh and Rohilkhund); 6. The Lahore Committee (For the Punjab); 7. The Kurrachi Committee (For Sindh); 8. The Surat Committee (For Guzerat); 9. The Bombay Committee (For the Concan); 10. The Poona Committee (For the Deccan, Khandeish and Berar); 11. The Nagpore Committee (For the Central Provinces); 12. The Madras Committee (For the Madras Presidency). See *Indian Mirror,* 21 January 1888. In a letter to the editor of the *Pioneer* in early January 1892, reproduced in the *Indian Mirror,* 7 January 1892, Hume talked of 29 'Congress Circles'.
23. *Indian Mirror,* 21 January 1888.
24. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 14.
25. For example, the *Bengalee,* 25 July 1891, reported how a fair number of delegates to the last Congress assembled at the British Indian Association rooms to organize a standing committee and that the old secretaries, Sarvadhikari, Ghosal and Banerjea, were reappointed. Again, the same paper reported on 15 August 1891 that R.C. Mitter was appointed president of the standing Congress committee and P.M. Mukerji was appointed vice-president.
26. *Report and Statement of Accounts of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress ..., 1894-5,* pp.10-12, Indian Association records. In a letter to Naoroji, 28 June 1895,

Wacha talked of 'the fifty Congress Centres'. NP. *India,* 21 September 1900, gives a list of 49 'Congress Circles'.

27. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 83.
28. *Ibid.,* p. 11; *The Indian National Congress; Report of the Madras Standing Committee for 1889* (Madras, 1889).
29. *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1899,* pp. xxix, 85-6.
30. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Appendix B, p. xix.
31. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 4.
32. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* p. 1.
33. *Ibid.,* pp. 1-2.
34. *Ibid.,* p. 11.
35. *Ibid.,* p. 95.
36. *Ibid.*
37. See, for example, B.C. Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times* (Calcutta, 1951), vol. ii, pp. 35-41. The *Bengalee,* 1 January 1887, remarked that at the last Congress in December 1886, there were differences over the resolutions on the public service and the legislative councils, but the Congress had done wisely in confining itself only to those particulars on which there was absolute unanimity. A correspondent to the *Mahratta* had already warned in November 1887, against fixing the business of the forthcoming meeting in advance and without consulting the delegates. The last Calcutta meeting had shown, he added, that the delegates would not be prepared to receive with favour anything like a cut and dried list of business prepared by a handful of men sitting at their desks in the rooms of some association. It was kind of the Madras committee, he had added, to try to shift questions for discussion at and approval of the Congress, but they ought not to take upon themselves to decide what the delegates should or should not discuss *(Mahratta,* 13 November 1887). On 27 November 1887 the *Mahratta* noted with approval that the Madras committee had 'acted wisely in asking the Provincial sub-committees to send their leading delegates a little earlier in order to prepare a programme of business'. The *Bengalee,* 24 December 1887, remarked that a large number of subjects had been recommended for discussion at the Madras Congress by the various standing Congress committees, associations and individuals and that a final agenda will be prepared at a preliminary meeting at Madras.
38. *Report of the Third National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 14.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 14.
41. *Ibid.,* pp. 79-80.
42. *Ibid.,* p. 82.
43. *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* p. x.
44. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* pp. vii-viii.
45. 'The Constitution of the Subjects Committee', *Bande Mataram,* 6 April 1908, also reproduced in *Mahratta,* 12 April 1908, and Sri Aurobindo, *Bande Mataram: Early Political Writings* (Pondicherry, 1973), pp. 830-3. Hereafter cited as *Early Political Writings.*
46. 'Constitution of the Indian National Congress Organisation Adopted at the Meeting of the Convention Committee Held at Allahabad on the 18th and 19th of April 1908', *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Appendix B, p. xxiv.

47. *Ibid.*
48. *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*, pp. xxix-xxx.
51. *Hindu,* 6 January 1915.
52. *Ibid.*, 16 January 1915.
53. *Leader,* 22 January 1916.
54. D.E. Wacha, 'Introduction', *Report of the Twenty-Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1913,* pp. 2-3.
55. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 7.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
57. See note 22 to chapter 1.
58. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* p. 394.
59. In view of the Muslim opposition to the Congress, which had already manifested itself, W.C. Bonnerjee had on 1 December 1886 written to Badruddin Tyabji of Bombay, his old friend of London days in the 1860s, inviting him to 'not only attend, but if all the delegates agree—and those from Bengal and Bombay have already agreed—preside over our deliberations' at the forthcoming Congress in Calcutta, but he was obviously not available. Bonnerjee to Tyabji, 1 December 1886, B. Tyabji Papers. A letter of B.M. Malabari to Naoroji, then in London, dated 3 August 1886, would, however, suggest that the latter was already being talked of as the likely president of the next Congress. Malabari to Naoroji, 3 August 1886, NP.
60. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* p. 50. Naoroji publicly admitted on 27 December 1886 that he 'was asked only two days ago to give an inaugural address'. *Ibid.*, p. 52; also Naoroji to S.N. Banerjea, 6 January 1910, NP.
61. The remark is W.C. Bonnerjee's. See *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 3; also note 59 above. Tyabji took a lot of persuading to become president of the 1887 Congress. (Wacha to Naoroji, 18 November, 2 December 1887, NP) This was the only Congress he ever attended. Though he was nominated by the Bombay Presidency Association to be one of its delegates at the 1885 Congress, he was allegedly unable to attend it because he was suddenly summoned to Cambay at the eleventh hour for professional work. (H.B. Tyabji, *Badruddin Tyabji: A Biography* (Bombay, 1952), pp. 175-6) He did not attend the second Congress at Calcutta in December 1886 even though he was invited by W.C. Bonnerjee not only to attend it, but also to preside over it. (Bonnerjee to Tyabji, 1 December 1886, Tyabji Papers) Despite his 'public promise' to attend the 1888 Congress—and even the offer of Hume that he could again preside over it—he failed to turn up at Allahabad in December 1888. (Hume to Tyabji, 22 January, 20 October 1888, *ibid.)* In a letter to Hume, dated 27 October 1888, he suggested the prorogation of the Congress for five years. (Tyabji to Hume, 27 October 1888, *ibid.)* In an interview with the Hyderabad correspondent of the *Hindu* in early 1891, Tyabji said that, though he continued to be 'a great sympathizer of the national movement', he had not taken part in Congress proceedings 'for some years ... because the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay, of which he was the President, was against his doing so ... he knew that he could do a lot of good to the Bombay Moslem community by being in touch with it, and that the Congress could go on without him, while the Anjuman-i-Islam could not'. (Cited in *Indian Mirror,* 13 February 1891)

62. *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* p. 3.
63. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 72.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 71. Yule was Hume's choice, and Mehta was initially doubtful of its wisdom. See Wacha to Naoroji, 21 September 1888, NP. The *Indian Spectator,* 30 December 1888, however, wrote: '... the appointment of a European President shows that the Indian National Congress elects deliberately to be a cosmopolitan institution. ... The sympathy of European gentlemen, wisely directed, ought to be of immense service to our cause. For purposes of a good beginning, the presence of Europeans is invaluable. But for the connection of the modestly described General Secretary to the Congress, it would be very hard to say how the different elements composing it could always have been kept together.'
65. Before Wedderburn was chosen in October 1889, the names of Forbes Adam, a Bombay businessman, and W. Gantz, a Madras barrister, had also been considered. See Wacha to Naoroji, 3 May, 23, 30 July, 20 September 1889, NP. Telang and Naoroji favoured an Indian from Madras to be president in 1889. Wacha to Naoroji, 30 July, 16 August 1889, *ibid.* Hume also wanted 'a Native President'. Wacha to Naoroji, 20 September 1889, *ibid.*
66. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. 6.
67. *Bengalee,* 20 December 1890. Confirmation of this report is available in Wacha to Naoroji, 8 July, 19 September, 1, 15 November, 6 December 1890, NP. The suggestion that R.L. Mitra could be the president of the 1890 Congress at Calcutta would indicate that the rule that the president of the Congress should be from a province other than the one in which the Congress was to be held was not yet firmly fixed.
68. Wacha to Naoroji, 10 October 1891, NP.
69. *Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1891,* p. 3.
70. *Ibid.;* also Hume's letter to editor, *Pioneer,* 28 November 1891.
71. *Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1891,* p. 3.
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Report of the Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1892,* pp. 9-10, 27.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
75. See note 157 below.
76. *Report of the Tenth Indian National Congress ..., 1894,* pp. 17-18.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
78. *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress ..., 1895,* p. 11.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
81. *Report of the Twelfth Indian National Congress ..., 1896,* p. 16. Sayani was considered for the presidentship in 1894 and 1895 also. See Wacha to Naoroji, 27 July 1894, NP; Wacha to Gokhale, 6 November 1895, GP; Ranade to Mehta, 5 November 1895, Mehta Papers.
82. *Report of the Thirteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1897,* Introduction, p. 1.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
84. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
86. 'The Congress is the only assembly of the people in this country, and the President of the Congress is what you may say the uncrowned king of the people.' R.N. Mudholkar: *Report of the Fourteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1898,* p. 14.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
89. *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1899,* p. 6.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. xxix, 30.
92. Bishambharnath's name was recommended by the British Committee, whose advice in the matter was sought by Jaishi Ram, a prominent member of the Lahore reception committee. See Minutes Books of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress (hereafter Minutes Books), vol. 5, meeting dated 2 November 1900.
93. *Indian Mirror,* 6 November 1900.
94. Letter of Gowardhan Dass to editor, *Tribune,* 10 January 1903; see also Wacha to Naoroji, 30 November 1900, NP.
95. *Mahratta,* 23 December 1900. See also *ibid.*, 9 and 30 December 1900.
96. Quoted in *ibid.*, 9 December 1900.
97. *Report of the Seventeenth Indian National Congress ..., 1901,* p. 23.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
99. S.N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 173; also Wacha to Naoroji, 18 October 1902, NP.
100. The phrase is P.M. Mehta's. See *Report of the Nineteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1903,* p. 7.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
102. *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress ..., 1904,* p. 22.
103. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-3.
104. Bonnerjee to Gokhale, 5 May 1903, GP.
105. *Ibid.*
106. The phrase is Wacha's. See Wacha to Gokhale, 5 August 1905, *ibid.*
107. Bonnerjee to Gokhale, 26 January 1906, *ibid.*
108. *Ibid.* On 15 March 1906 Bonnerjee again wrote to Gokhale supporting Mudholkar's claim and counselling against the choice of Sir Harnam Singh and E. Norton, of the first because he had never taken part in Congress proceedings, and of the second because his 'selection will [not] be a good one'. 'We ought I think to bring up our own Congress workers one by one and make them Congress Presidents.' *Ibid.*
109. Wacha to Gokhale, 21 July 1906, *ibid.*
110. *Ibid.*
111. Wedderburn to Gokhale, 8 August 1906, *ibid.*
112. See note 106 to chapter 5 below.
113. *Indian Social Reformer,* 23 September 1906.
114. *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1906,* pp. 133-4.
115. Gokhale to H.N. Apte, 11 September 1907, GP.
116. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Appendix B, p. xxiii.
117. Gokhale to A.V. Patwardhan, 10 July 1908; Gokhale to V.K. Iyer, 25 September 1908, GP.
118. Wacha to Gokhale, 9 October 1908, *ibid.*
119. *Report of the Twenty-Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1909,* p. 15.
120. Gokhale to Wedderburn, 30 June 1910, GP.
121. *Ibid.*
122. *Ibid.*
123. R. MacDonald to Gokhale, 6 September 1911, GP.

124. Gokhale to Chintamani 26 October 1911, *ibid.*
125. *Ibid.*
126. See Wedderburn to Gokhale, 16 February 1911, GP. Some Moderate leaders, especially those from Bombay, were probably also anxious to avoid the election of Cotton because they knew that the viceroy, Hardinge, disliked Cotton and had advised the Congress deputation, headed by Wedderburn, which saw him in January 1911, to dissociate themselves from him. See Hardinge to Chirol, 5 January 1911, and Chirol to Hardinge, 2 February 1912, Hardinge Papers.
127. Chintamani to Gokhale, 1 November 1911, GP.
128. *Report of the Twenty-Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1911,* p. 10.
129. *Ibid.*
130. *Ibid.,* p. 11.
131. Quoted in *Leader,* 5 October 1912.
132. *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1912,* p. 10.
133. *Ibid.,* p. 11
134. See H.B. Dickshit to Gokhale, 10 September 1907, GP.
135. See Gokhale to H.N. Apte, 11 September 1907, and V.K. Iyer to Gokhale, 26 September 1907, *ibid.*
136. Gopaldas Jethamal: '... when in the memorable Christmas of 1907, before the commencement of the session of the Congress at Surat, all the delegates from various parts of Sind assembled in the Congress camp resolved to invite the Congress to hold its next session at Karachi, the question naturally arose amongst them as to who should be selected to preside over the deliberations of the Sind Session ... it will not surprise you to learn that all the delegates with one voice approved of the selection of the Honourable Nawab Sayyud Mahomed Bahadur of Madras.' *Report of the Twenty-Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1913,* p. 32.
137. *Ibid.;* also *Phoenix,* quoted in *Leader,* 13 May 1913.
138. *Report of the Twenty-Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1913,* pp. 10, 37.
139. *Hindu,* 30 September 1914.
140. *Leader,* 4 October 1914.
141. See, for example, *Leader,* 4, 6, 11, 15, 16 October 1914; *Mahratta,* 11 October 1914; *Tribune,* 30 October 1914.
142. *Report of the Twenty-Ninth Indian National Congress ..., 1914,* pp. 16-20.
143. *Report of the Special Session of the Indian National Congress Held at Bombay on 29th, 30th August & Ist September, 1918,* p. 13. Mrs Besant and Tilak had first offered the presidentship to the Raja of Mahmudabad, but the latter was apparently dissuaded by H. Butler, lieutenant-governor of the U.P., from accepting it. See Butler to Chelmsford, 31 July 1918, Chelmsford Papers.
144. *Report of the Thirty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1918,* p. 15.
145. Wacha to Naoroji, 21 September 1888, NP.
146. See *ibid.,* 28 August 1888, *ibid.*
147. *Ibid.,* 9 October 1888, *ibid.*
148. *Ibid.,* 3 May, 23, 30 July, 20 September 1889, *ibid.*
149. *Ibid.,* 24 October 1889, *ibid.*
150. *Ibid.,* 8 July 1890; also 19 September 1890, *ibid.*

151. Naoroji to Wacha, 29 August 1890, *ibid.*
152. *Bengalee,* 8 November 1890.
153. Wacha to Naoroji, 6 December 1890, NP.
154. Wacha even hinted that Mehta may not be able to go to the Congress at Calcutta. See *ibid.*
155. Wacha to Naoroji, 12 December 1890, *ibid.*
156. *Ibid.,* 27 July, 31 August 1894, *ibid.*
157. See Minutes Books, vol. 3, *passim.* Edward Blake said that he felt honoured to be invited and would have been glad to go, but his professional engagements would not allow him to leave England. Michael Davitt counselled Naoroji against his association with the Congress, because he feared that it might harm the Congress cause: 'I would invite all the envenomed hostility of the Anglo-Indian press as well as that of the Unionist press, in Great Britain. My former political delinquencies would be raked up—my conviction for Fenianism, Land Leaguism, the Parnel Commission, etc., and though my countrymen and many Englishmen think no worse of me for my career; (and though it is to myself a matter of boast and not for apology or regrets) you and your friends in London are called upon to consider whether or not I would be the wisest selection ....' Davitt to Naoroji, 5 October 1894, NP; see also T.W. Moody, *Davitt and Irish Revolution 1846-82* (Oxford, 1981), p. 549. Hume also wrote to Naoroji: 'Davitt would not do for Madras. Nor indeed would he do for the Congress. He has too revolutionary a name—noble fellow as he is.' Hume to Naoroji, n.d., NP. The reply of John Dillon is not known.
158. Bonnerjee to Naoroji, 4 June 1902; also 2 June 1902, NP.
159. It is not known exactly when this decision was taken. The Minutes Books of the British Committee, vol. 4, record on 21 September 1897: 'Having regard to the previous decision that the President of the Congress should either be a native of India, or some other person who had spent much time in the country, and enjoyed the confidence of the people ....' Writing to Naoroji on 4 June 1902, Bonnerjee said that 'The rule ... was passed at a meeting of the British Committee about three years or so ago at which Sir William Wedderburn, Mr. Hume and you and I and others were present. The subject came up in consequence of an application which had come to you from some members of the Congress asking you to get some prominent Englishman out to preside at the Congress as they had done in the case of Mr. Webb.' Bonnerjee to Naoroji, 4 June 1902, NP. See also Bonnerjee to C. Vijiaraghavachariar, 19 January 1903, Vijiaraghavachariar Papers.
160. *Gujarati,* 20 October 1895; also Wacha to Naoroji, 30 August 1895, NP.
161. Wacha to Naoroji, 30 August 1895, NP.
162. *Indian Social Reformer,* 6 July 1902.
163. Wacha to Naoroji, 27 August 1897; also 18 September 1897, NP. See also Mudholkar to Naoroji, 9 September 1897; Viraraghava Chariar to Naoroji, 7 October 1897; M.G. Ranade to Naoroji, 20 October 1897, *ibid.*
164. *Ibid.*
165. Wacha to Naoroji, 27 August 1897, NP.
166. Minutes Books, vol. 4, meeting dated 21 September 1897. Even after Nair had accepted the offer, attempts were made to reopen the issue and it was even suggested that John Adam, principal of the Madras Pachaiyappa College, may be asked to preside.
167. R.P. Masani, *Dadabhai Naoroji: The Grand Old Man of India* (London, 1939), p. 404.
168. Naoroji to secretary, Mahajana Sabha, 29 July 1898, *ibid.*

169. Wacha to Naoroji, 15 July 1899, NP.
170. *Ibid.*
171. Wedderburn to Curzon, 11 October 1900, 10 July 1902, Curzon Papers; Wedderburn to Naoroji, 1 September 1902, NP.
172. Wacha to Naoroji, 16 May 1903, NP.
173. *Ibid.*, 23 May 1903, *ibid.*
174. *Ibid.*, 16, 23 May, 20, 27 June, 25 July 1903, *ibid.;* also R.C. Dutt to Naoroji, 4, 6 July 1903, *ibid.* and R.C. Dutt Papers.
175. Wacha to Naoroji, 30 July 1904, NP.
176. See Gokhale to Wedderburn, 29 April, 30 June 1910, GP.
177. See p.70 above.
178. *Wednesday Review*, 19 June 1912, in RNP, Madras.
179. *Modern Review*, July 1912, p. 97.
180. *Leader,* 20 January, 10 May, 2, 31 July 1914; *Modern Review,* March 1914, p. 342.
181. See *New India*, 23 August 1915, 7, 14 August 1916, and A.H. Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (London, 1963), pp. 238-9, 249.
182. *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress ..., 1895,* p. 13.
183. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 3.
184. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* p. 10.
185. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* pp. 10-14.
186. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* pp. 6-8.
187. *Indian Mirror,* 6 January 1889.
188. Rabindranath Tagore, *Greater India* (Madras, 1921), pp. 18-20.
189. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 7.
190. *Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1891,* p. vi.
191. *Indian Mirror,* 21 January 1888.
192. *Statesman,* 27 December 1895.
193. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Appendix B, p. xxiii.
194. *Ibid.*
195. After his retirement from the Indian army, Captain A.T. Banon, who had married an Indian lady, settled as an orchardist in the Kangra district of the then Panjab. His descendants still reside in the Kullu-Manali region of Himachal Pradesh. J.N. Ghosal was the brother-in-law of poet Rabindranath Tagore. Aristocratic, urbane and selfless, he was brought in contact with Hume in the early 1880s because of his interest in theosophy. About him G.P. Pillai wrote: 'His arrival heralds the Congress. Find you Mr. Ghosal in any Indian town in December? There the Congress will be held. He comes with the Congress, goes with the Congress. Or rather, he comes before the Congress, goes after the Congress. First to come, last to go, Mr. Ghosal is the pivot round which the Congress turns. What Parliament was to Pitt, that the Congress is to Mr. Ghosal. It is his mistress, his stud, his dice-box, his game-preserve; it is his ambition, his library, his creed. Without him, no Congress has been held, without him will ever any Congress be held? ... Mr. Ghosal is the right-hand man of the Congress President, who always sits to the President's left at the Congress. He is the President's encyclopaedia, his authority, his mainstay, his backbone, his adviser, his high priest, his plaything. He is in charge of the too-too-dreaded President's gong. ... Mr. Ghosal speaks but once at every Congress. As soon as the President's opening speech is over, up

rises Mr. Ghosal, reminds the delegates that they should restrict their loquacious tendencies to ten or five minutes, as the case may be, reads the rules of procedure, goes over the list of members of the Subjects Committee and then sits down amidst thunderous applause. ... Mr. Ghosal is not only the advance guard of the Congress but its universal provider. ... If you want anything which you cannot get in the Congress camp, you have only to enter Mr. Ghosal's room.' G.P. Pillai, *Indian Congressmen* (Madras, 1899), pp. 38-40. For Gandhi's description of Ghosal at the 1901 Congress in Calcutta, see his *Autobiography* (Ahmedabad, 1940 ed.), pp. 169-70.

196. *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* p. 67.
197. *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1912,* p. 119; *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress ..., 1915,* p. 161.
198. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* pp. 4, 7.
199. *Report of the Seventeenth Indian National Congress ..., 1901,* p. 77; *Report of the Eighteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1902,* p. 151. This was done 'to meet the balance required to defray the expenses of *India* and the British Committee'.
200. *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1912,* p. 119.
201. J. Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, 1942), p. 27. The *Indian Mirror* wrote about the opening day of the 1901 Congress at Calcutta: 'As a matter of fact, wealth and social position were only too much in evidence on that day.' *Indian Mirror,* 28 December 1901.
202. See *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 63. This assurance was also embodied in the Congress constitution of 1908. See *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Appendix B, p. xxiv.
203. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Appendix B, p. xxiv.
204. See Hume to secretaries, standing Congress committees, 5 January 1888, Tyabji Papers.
205. See *Report of the Sixteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1900,* p. 70; N.G. Barrier, *The Punjab Alienation of Land Bill of 1900* (Durham, 1966), pp. 67-8; J.R. McLane, *Indian Nationalism and the Early Congress* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 253-8.
206. H. Vishindas, 'The Congress and Conferences at Karachi', *Modern Review,* February 1914, p. 225; *Leader,* 4, 6 January 1914.
207. See note 141 above.
208. Hugh Owen, *The Indian Nationalist Movement* (New Delhi, 1990), pp. 132-5.
209. Minutes Books, vol. 3, meeting dated 18 November 1895. For Naoroji's views on the subject, see Naoroji to Hume, 5 January 1888, in Masani, *op. cit.,* pp. 301-2. For Hume's views, see *Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1891,* p. 41. Only in 1896 did the Congress adopt a resolution, which its mover, S.P. Sinha, claimed was not in violation of the settled policy of the Congress, saying that no prince or chief should be deposed without trial before a public tribunal satisfactory both to the British government and the Indian princes and chiefs. See *Report of the Twelfth Indian National Congress ..., 1896,* pp. 176-81. The resolution was repeated at the 1897 and 1898 sessions of the Congress. See *Report of the Thirteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1897,* p. 47, and *Report of the Fourteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1898,* p. 133.
210. See Malabari to Naoroji, 28 December 1889, NP.
211. Miss S. Manockjee Cursetjee, directress of Alexandra Girls' School, Bombay.
212. Mrs Kashibai Kanitkar, authoress and journalist.
213. Mrs Swarna Kumari Devi Ghosal, Mrs Kadambini Ganguli, and Mrs G.N. Das.

214. Pandita Ramabai, Mrs S. Trimbuek and Mrs Nikambe—all teachers.
215. Miss Jessie Royee Carlton, M.D., and Mrs Emma Brainerd Ryder, M.D.
216. *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* p. xxxix; also *India,* Feburary 1890.
217. She was Mrs Kadambini Ganguli (née Bose), a graduate of Caleutta university and wife of the prominent Congress leader, Dwarakanath Ganguli, who later beeame a medical praetitioner.
218. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. xi.
219. On 17 Deeember 1891 we find Hume writing to Mehta from Nagpur enquiring as to how many lady delegates were coming from Bombay and telling him that Bengal was sending three. 'You know you raseal you ean do anything with the women—and make their husbands delegates also (if they have husbands).' Mehta Papers.
220. *Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1891,* Appendix 1, no. 35.
221. For example, though only four ladies attended the 1890 Congress as delegates, 'more than a hundred' went there as visitors. See *Sanjibani,* 10 January 1891, quoted in Nirmal Sinha (ed.), *Freedom Movement in Bengal 1818-1904: Who's Who* (Caleutta, 1968), p. 417. At the speeial session of the Congress at Bombay in August 1918, there were 'no less than 500' ladies present (they were wrongly referred to as 'Lady delegates'). *Report of the Special Session of Indian National Congress ..., 1918,* pp. 1-2.
222. For details, see L.R. Gokhale, *The First Twenty Years of the Indian National Congress* (Bombay, 1906), Tables III-VII, pp. 4-20, MeLane, *op. cit.,* pp. 96-8; P.C. Ghosh, *The Development of the Indian National Congress 1892-1909* (Caleutta, 1960), pp. 23-5.
223. Quoted in *Indian Nation,* 2 July 1903.
224. See, for example, *Report of the Tenth Indian National Congress ..., 1894,* pp. 29-30, and *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress ..., 1895,* pp. 57-8.
225. 'Introduetion' to the *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 11.
226. The Poona Congress (1895) eost Rs 46,000 (*Gujarati,* 29 November 1903), the Ahmedabad Congress (1902), Rs 53,000 *(ibid.),* and the Bankipur Congress (1912), Rs 44,000 *(Leader,* 7 December 1913).
227. The Amritsar Congress (1919), with 7031 delegates, eost approximately two lakh and thirteen thousand rupees *(Report of the Thirty-Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1919,* Appendix F); so it would be safe to say that the Delhi Congress (1918), with 4881 delegates, must have eost over a lakh of rupees.
228. C.W. Bolton to C.S. Bayley, 18 July 1899, enel. Curzon to Hamilton, 2 August 1899, Hamilton Papers.
229. See pp. 100-1 below.
230. *Sudharak,* 12 Deeember 1892. See also *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 28 Deeember 1891, and C.Y. Chintamani to Gokhale, 6 November 1903, GP.
231. Madras held its first provineial eonferenee in 1885, Bengal and Bombay in 1888, Panjab in 1895, C.P. in 1905, U.P. in 1907, Bihar in 1908, and Gujarat and Sindh in 1917.
232. Distriet eonferenees were not held until the late nineteenth eentury and they were mostly organized in western and southern India.
233. Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* p. 84.
234. *Ibid.,* pp. 54-6; Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 403-5.
235. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* pp. 403-5.
236. *Ibid.*

237. Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
238. *Ibid.*
239. Hume to Naoroji, 10 December 1887, NP.
240. Naoroji to Malabari, 12 October 1888; Naoroji to N.J. Vaishnav, 12 January 1889, NP; *Voice of India,* October 1888, pp. 553-5.
241. Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-3.
242. See p. 45 above.
243. See, for example, Naoroji to Hume, 20 February 1887, NP.
244. See, for example, Naoroji to Wedderburn, 20 August 1886; Naoroji to Hume, 5 January 1888; Naoroji to Malabari, 31 August, 12 October, 18 November 1888, *ibid.*
245. Hume's letter of 9 March 1888 is unfortunately not available (probably Naoroji passed it on to Digby), but we have Naoroji's reply to it, dated 5 April 1888, in NP. See also Digby to standing Congress committees, 14 June 1889, Indian Association records, and *India,* 5 December 1890, p. 296.
246. Naoroji to Hume, 5 April 1888; Naoroji to Malabari, 31 August 1888, NP; *India,* 5 December 1890, p. 296.
247. See Digby to honorary secretary, National Indian Association, Bombay, 24 April 1885, Mehta Papers.
248. See Digby to Naoroji, 9 February 1888, NP; Digby to Mehta, 10 February 1888, Mehta Papers; *India,* 5 December 1890, p. 296. In late 1887 Robert Knight had advised Indians to have accredited agents in England. See his *The Coming Congress at Madras* (Calcutta, 1887), pp. 22-3.
249. Digby to Naoroji, 6, 20, 24 May 1889, NP.
250. See undated, but probably early May 1888, notice of 'Indian Political and General Agency' in NP; also advertisement of the Agency in *India,* February 1890, 30 September 1892. The Agency was in the beginning called 'Indian Political and General Agency'. From late August 1888 onwards it came to be called 'Indian Political Agency'. See Digby to Naoroji, 6 June and 28 August 1888, NP.
251. Naoroji to Hume, 5 April 1888, and Digby to Naoroji, 24 May 1888, NP.
252. Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
253. *Ibid.* According to the information available in the Minutes Books of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, vol. 1, the actual expenditure in 1888 was £1,538.3.4 and that in 1889 £2,365.9.6. The exchange rate at that time was 1s. 1d. for a rupee. After 1894 it rose slightly and in 1899 it was fixed at 1s. 4d.
254. Digby to Naoroji, 9 December 1888, NP.
255. Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-6.
256. Minutes Books, vol. 1, meeting dated 20 June 1889. For Wedderburn's memo. on the subject, dated 26 May 1889, see *Mahratta,* 27 July 1890; copy also in records of the Indian Association.
257. Minutes Books, vol. 1, meeting dated 27 July 1889.
258. Hume to secretaries, standing Congress committees, 15 September 1889, *ibid.*; also Hume to Wedderburn, 7 June 1889, *ibid.*
259. *Ibid.;* also Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, p. 88.
260. Minutes Books, vol. 1, meeting dated 30 July 1889.
261. *Ibid.*

262. *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* p. 7.
263. *Ibid.,* pp. 67-8.
264. Minutes Books, vol. 1, meeting dated 4 February 1890; also vol. 4, meeting dated 3 October 1899: Naoroji recalling the circumstances in which the decision was taken.
265. Minutes Books, vol. 1, meeting dated 18 February 1890.
266. M.D. Morrow, 'The Origins and Early Years of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, 1885-1907', London University Ph.D. thesis, 1977, p. 68.
267. Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* p. 97.
268. See, for example, Wedderburn to Wacha, 6 May 1901, GP, and Bonnerjee to Wedderburn, 10 May 1903, NP.
269. Minutes Books, vol. 4, meeting dated 3 October 1899; Caine to Gokhale, 29 October 1897, GP; see also J.P. Goodridge to Gokhale, 18 February, 8 May 1898, *ibid.*
270. Naoroji to Gokhale, 27 September 1901, GP.
271. 'To Subscribers to "India"', 21 July 1903, *ibid.*
272. Trafalgar Buildings, like 25 Craven Street, housed the offices of Hutchinson & Co., owned by Digby's father-in-law, in which he was himself a partner.
273. Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* p. 88.
274. Minutes Books, vol. 7, meeting dated 1 August 1917.
275. *Ibid.,* meeting dated 14 November 1919. Almost at the same time the Moderates established a separate Indian Reforms Committee at 21 Westminster Palace Gardens with Lord Clwyd as chairman and H.E.A. Cotton and Douglas Hall as secretaries. See S.K. Ratcliffe, *Sir William Wedderburn and the Indian Reform Movement* (London, 1923), p. 108.
276. Digby's explanation at the meeting of the Committee on 27 July 1889, Minutes Books, vol. 1.
277. *Ibid.*
278. *Ibid.,* meeting dated 24 October 1889.
279. *Ibid.,* meeting dated 18 February 1890.
280. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. 60. See also *Indian Mirror,* 9, 13 January 1891.
281. Hume's letter to secretaries of standing Congress committees, dated 15 September 1889, Minutes Books, vol. 1.
282. *Ibid.,* vol. 8, meeting of the executive committee dated 13 July 1920.
283. *Ibid.,* vol. 7, meeting dated 5 September 1919.
284. *Ibid.,* vol. 1, meetings dated 25 March and 15 April 1890. Wedderburn is obviously wrong when he says in his biography of Hume that the latter attended a meeting of the Committee for the first time 'on the 6th of May 1890' (Wedderburn, *op. cit.,* p. 89).
285. At the 1890 session of the Congress at Calcutta, M. Viraraghava Chariar of Madras disclosed 'that some years ago, when there was a rumour that Government had an idea of suppressing the Congress, we had almost made up our minds to hold it in London, ... many offers and promises of funds were made in case such a measure proved necessary'. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. 66; see also Hume to Lansdowne, 9 January 1891, Lansdowne Papers.
286. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. 68.
287. Wedderburn to Mehta, 1 February 1891, Mehta Papers.

288. Letter, dated 27 October 1891, from Wedderburn and Digby to Ajudhianath, joint general secretary, Indian National Congress, Minutes Books, vol. 2.
289. *Ibid.*, meetings dated 14 September and 13 October 1891.
290. The letter is reproduced in *Mahratta,* 6 December 1891. Hume had expressed a desire to resign the secretaryship even after the 1890 Congress. See his letter to *Statesman,* 6 February 1891.
291. *Report of the Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1891,* p. 54.
292. *Ibid.*
293. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
294. *Report of the Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1892,* p. 111.
295. See, for example, *Mahratta,* 27 September, 18 October 1892, and K.P. Roy in *Report of the Ninth Indian National Congress ..., 1893,* p. 148.
296. The idea of holding a Congress session in London was also mooted in 1897, 1898, 1905, 1907, 1908, 1909, and 1916.
297. See, for example, Minutes Books, vols. 4 and 6, meetings dated 11 September 1898 and 14 September 1909.
298. Minutes Books, vol. 2, meetings dated 13 October and 10 November 1891; also M.D. Morrow, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
299. See Wedderburn's 'memorandum on the formation of an Indian Party', dated 26 May 1889, in *Mahratta,* 27 July 1890. A copy of this document is available in the records of the Indian Association, Calcutta. See also Wedderburn's 'Note for the consideration of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress', dated 3 April 1891, in NP.
300. Wedderburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-4.
301. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-6.
302. *Mr. A.O. Hume's Farewell to India* (London, 1894), pp. 9-11. Hume was, however, constrained to say that 'it is still of vital importance to India that the Liberal party should remain in power, and it will be a real misfortune, a deadly blight and frost upon all our most cherished aspirations if the Tories get into and remain, for any considerable period, in power'. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
303. Wedderburn to Gokhale, 28 July 1910, GP.
304. Letter of Hume in *Bengalee,* 3 December 1892.
305. Hume to secretaries, standing Congress committees, 15 September 1889, Minutes Books, vol. 1. See also *Gujarati,* 15 June 1890, and Hume to secretaries, standing Congress committees, 27 October 1891, Indian Association records, for similar letters of Hume in 1890 and 1891 respectively.
306. Minutes Books, vol. 2, meeting dated 19 July 1892.
307. Hume to Maharaja of Darbhanga, 3 February 1893, reproduced in K.K. Datta, *Report of the Regional Records Survey Committee, Bihar, 1960-61* (Patna, n.d.), pp. 27-9.
308. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30. For a similar appeal to Maharaja of Darbhanga by Hume on 28 June 1893, see *ibid.*, pp. 33-4.
309. This and the following account of the finances of the British Committee and *India* is based on the Minutes Books of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, 8 vols.; Annual Statements of Receipts and Expenditure of the British Committee; Annual Reports of the British Committee; 'Memo. by the Secretary [W. Douglas Hall] on the Financial Position, etc.', dated 12 February 1918, Minutes Books, vol. 7; 'British Committee and the

Newspaper "India"; Statement of Revenue and Expenditure since 1894', Supplement to *Mahratta*, 11 January 1920; and the information contained in the private papers of Naoroji, Gokhale and Basu.

310. See, for example, Wedderburn to Basu, 2, 15 December 1915, Basu Papers.
311. Draft of letter approved by the British Committee at its meeting held on 23-4 June 1903, Minutes Books, vol. 5.
312. Minutes Books, vol. 1, meeting dated 24 October 1889.
313. 'Note for the consideration of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress', 3 April 1891, NP.
314. 'Departmental (J.P.) Note on the Relations between Government and the Indian National Congress Movement', 1906, L/P & J/6/762, no. 1461, 1906, IOR; also Morrow, *op. cit.*, p. 128.
315. Mudholkar to Naoroji, 7 February 1902, NP.
316. Minutes Books, vol. 7, meetings dated 30 May, 2, 6 June, 4, 11, 18 July 1919; see also G.B. Clark, 'The New Constitution of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress', *India*, 8 August 1919. Wacha would have supported Clark. See Wacha to C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar, 24 June 1918, AICC Files, 1918, no. 2/1 and Wacha to J.L. Maffey, 13 July 1918, Chelmsford Papers.
317. Hume to Dufferin, 2 August 1886, Dufferin Papers; Hume to Naoroji, 14 November 1889, NP.
318. Quoted in *Panjabee*, 3 August 1909.
319. Minutes Books, vol. 5, meeting dated 2 April 1901.
320. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Appendix B, p. xxv. For mention of the British Committee in the short-lived constitution or 1899, see p. 160 below.
321. St. Nihal Singh, 'The British Congress Committee: A Retrospect', *Modern Review*, May 1919, p. 529; see also his 'The Future of the British Congress Committee: A Warning and an Appeal', *Commonweal*, 14 March 1919.
322. St. Nihal Singh, 'The British Congress Committee: A Retrospect', *Modern Review*, May 1919, p. 530.
323. Minutes Books, vol. 7, meetings dated 2, 6 June, 11, 18 July 1918; see also, G.B. Clark, 'The New Constitution of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress', *India*, 8 August 1919.
324. See S. A. Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India* (Berkeley, 1962), p. 289.
325. *Report of the Thirty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1918,* Appendix A, p.x.
326. Minutes Books, vol. 7, meeting dated 26 February 1919.
327. *Ibid.*, meeting dated 25 July 1918; G.I. Patel, *Vithalbhai Patel: Life and Times* (Bombay, 1950), vol. i, pp. 388-94.
328. Minutes Books, vol. 7, meeting dated 25 July 1918. See also Clark, 'The New Constitution of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress', *India*, 8 August 1919.
329. Minutes Books, vol. 8, meeting of executive committee, dated 13 July 1920.
330. *Ibid.*, meetings dated 12, 26 October 1920; 'British Committee's Activities: Report of the Work during 1920, to be presented to the Indian National Congress on December 25, 1920', in *India*, 3 December 1920; J.M. Parekh and H. Knight to V.J. Patel, 28 October 1920, and Patel to Ben Spoor, 17 November 1920, AICC Files, 1920, no. 10. Patel told Ben Spoor

that the episode had 'given a handle in the hands of those who have been urging for the discontinuance of the Committee'.

331. *Report of the Thirty-Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1920,* p. 94.
332. *Ibid.*
333. Minutes Books, vol. 8, meeting of the 'Winding-up Committee', 11 November 1921.
334. Miss Helena Normanton, an Irish lady who was long associated with the British Committee in various capacities, wrote in her book *India in England* (Madras, 1921), p. 16, that 'there was always a certain lack of dash, push and go about the British Committee. Its members were venerable gentlemen of much the same type—enthusiasts, altruists and thinkers.'
335. See Wolpert, *op. cit.*, p. 285.
336. 'Indians do not yet sufficiently realise that a "frontal attack" on the Bureaucracy will always be repulsed with slaughter and that a "flanking movement", by way of the British Democracy, is the practical method to dislodge them.' Wedderburn to Gokhale, 15 January 1906, GP. See also Wedderburn to Mehta, 23 January 1906, Mehta Papers.
337. *Indian Spectator,* 17 January 1897.
338. Naoroji to G.S. Iyer and O.P. Nambiar, joint secretaries, Madras Mahajana Sabha, 2 May 1902, NP.
339. 'Introduction' to *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* p. 1.
340. Hume's letter to secretaries of standing Congress committees, 15 September 1889, in Minutes Books, vol. 1.
341. 'Memo. by the Secretary [W. Douglas Hall] on the Financial position, etc.', read at the Committee meeting on 12 February 1918, Minutes Books, vol. 7; *Servant of India,* 3 October 1918.
342. See Naoroji to Telang, 27 February 1887, NP. Naoroji wrote this letter while he was still in Bombay, and not from London, as G. Johnson *(Provincial Politics and Indian Nationalism* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 34, n. 2) mistakenly suggests. Naoroji left for England on 11 March 1887. See Naoroji to Hume, 20 February,? March 1887, NP.
343. Telang to Naoroji, 28 February 1887, NP.
344. *Indian Mirror,* 28 January 1888.
345. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* pp. 64, 182.
346. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
347. *Ibid.*
348. *Ibid.*
349. See Wacha to Naoroji, 16 January 1892, NP. For Hume's tribute to Ajudhianath, see *Pioneer,* 31 March 1892.
350. *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* p. 67.
351. The phrase is Ananda Charlu's. See his article entitled 'The Indian National Congress: A Suggestive Retrospect', *Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar,* July-August 1903, p. 20.
352. *Report of the Ninth Indian National Congress ..., 1893,* p. 149.
353. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-50.
354. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
355. *Indian Mirror,* 29 January 1892.
356. *Ibid.*, 14 August 1892.
357. *Report of the Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1892,* p. 115.

358. P. Ananda Charlu, 'The Indian National Congress: A Suggestive Retrospect', *Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar,* July-August 1903, p. 21.
359. *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress ..., 1895,* pp. 164-5.
360. *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1899,* p. xxix.
361. 'The main duty in connection with this office is to raise funds to keep up the British Committee in London.' N. Subba Rao: *Report of the Twenty-Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1913,* p. 115.
362. The phrase is Wedderburn's. See Wedderburn to Gokhale, 16 March 1904, GP.
363. S.N. Banerjea: *Report of the Nineteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1903,* p. 147.
364. Wedderburn to Gokhale, 10 March 1904, GP.
365. *Ibid.,* 16 March 1904, *ibid.*
366. *Ibid.,* 28 April 1904, *ibid.*
367. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* pp. 114-15.
368. *Report of the Twenty-Eighth Indian National Congress ..., 1913,* p. 142.
369. *Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1917,* p. 133.
370. See pp. 161-3 below.
371. R.C. Dutt to G.K. Gokhale, 23 February 1903, GP.
372. *Ibid.,* 18 November 1903, *ibid.*
373. *Ibid.,* 22 March 1904, *ibid.*
374. *Leader,* 11 May 1912.
375. *Ibid.,* 19 December 1914.
376. *Ibid.,* 24 December 1912.
377. C.Y. Chintamani, 'The Indian National Congress', *ibid.,* and *New India,* 19 December 1914.
378. Gokhale to Basu, 25 December 1914: GP. On 25 August 1910 Gokhale had written to C. Vijiaraghavachariar of Salem: 'My own feeling ... is that whatever we may now do the Congress as a national movement is bound to decline more and more during the next few years. That disintegrating tendency, which overtakes us from time to time, and which has been one of the principal curses of the country, has, I fear, asserted itself in regard to the Congress and, my own personal view is that nothing will now save the situation, till a new generation rises to inaugurate practically a new movement.' Vijiaraghavachariar Papers.
379. 'The Political Outlook', *Indian Social Reformer,* 31 December 1916.
380. 'Wanted a Programme', *ibid.,* 13 January 1918.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. *Petition to Parliament from the Members of the British Indian Association and other Native Inhabitants of the Bengal Presidency, relative to the East India Company's Charter* (Calcutta, 1852), p. 15.
2. W.C. Bonnerjee, 'Representative and Responsible Government for India', *Journal of the East India Association,* September 1867, pp. 157-78.
3. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 1, 8 September, and 10 November 1870.
4. *Hindoo Patriot,* 24 August 1874.
5. R.C. Palit (ed.), *Speeches of Babu Surendranath Banerjea, 1876-80* (Calcutta, 1894), vol. i, p. 224.

6. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress,* p. 307.
7. *Quarterly Journal of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha,* April 1883, pp. 29-30.
8. *Report of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* p. 3.
9. *Ibid.,* p. 9.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 29.
11. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 2.
12. *Ibid.,* pp. 4-6.
13. Hume to Naoroji, 12 December 1887, NP.
14. Reproduced in *Indian Mirror,* 23 May 1888.
15. *Pioneer Mail,* 7 November 1888.
16. B.C. Pal, *The National Congress* (Lahore, 1887), p. 9.
17. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. 2.
18. *Report of the Thirteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1897,* pp. 14-15.
19. *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1899,* p. 11.
20. *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress ..., 1895,* p. 51.
21. 'Every Indian secretly longs for independence.' *Indian Social Reformer,* 25 September 1904.
22. *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1899,* p. 29.
23. In a sermon at St Paul's Cathedral, London, on 24 April 1901, the then Lord Bishop of Bombay, the Revd James MacArthur, had remarked that 'the restlessness which is observable on the surface of Indian life, the discontent, the fretfulness, the disposition to criticise, the tone of bitterness, the temper of suspicion and seeming unfriendliness' is not to be interpreted 'as evidence of disloyalty to our Government' but as 'the aspiration for a resuscitated national existence'. The educated classes in India had, he said, 'seized a political ideal, viz., that of self-government under British paramountcy. ... We cannot censure the ideal. Philosophical minds among them are aware that the time is not yet, and that progress to be sound must be slow. But they want to move in the right direction. They are jealous of influences which tend to obscure the ideal, or to promote what they think injurious developments.' *India,* 17 May 1901. For his continued and sympathetic appreciation of Indian nationalism, see also the Bishop of Southampton, 'The Unrest in India and Some of Its Causes', *The East and the West,* January 1908, pp. 1-20.
24. Naoroji to Dutt, 5 July 1903, Dutt Papers. Naoroji also said: 'If we begin the fight today, it may be half a century or a century perhaps, that the object will be attained.' *Ibid.* See also Naoroji to Dutt, 3 July 1903, *ibid.*
25. 'A Call to Arms', II, *Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar,* December 1903, p. 474. This and the other messages from Wedderburn, Hume and Bonnerjee were later reprinted in a pamphlet form for wider circulation, but the Bombay Congress leaders considered them to be too inflammatory and suppressed the pamphlet. See Wacha to Gokhale, 15 May 1904, GP.
26. *India,* 10 June 1904.
27. *Ibid.*
28. See Wacha to Naoroji, 9 July, 15, 28 October, 19 November, 3, 18, 31 December 1904, NP.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress ..., 1904,* pp. 179-80.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 180-97.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 37. Cotton had foreshadowed this goal in his book *New India or India in Transition* first published in 1885. He had recently reiterated it in a lecture before the Positivist Society in London in 1902. See 'Some Indian Problems', *East & West,* September 1902, pp. 1200-1.
33. 'Constitution of the Servants of India Society', in *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale* (Madras, 1920), p. 915.
34. *India,* 6 October—24 November 1905.
35. *Speeches and Writings of Dadabhai Naoroji* (Madras, 1910), p. 652; Appendix C to *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress ..., 1905,* p. i.
36. *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress ..., 1905,* p. 13.
37. Morley to Minto, 2 August 1906, Morley Papers.
38. The articles are reproduced in Haridas and Uma Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought* (Calcutta, 1958), pp. 63-123, *Sri Aurobindo* (Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library De Luxe Edition, Pondicherry, 1972), vol. i, pp. 5-56, and Sri Aurobindo, *Early Political Writings,* pp. 5-56.
39. Sri Aurobindo, *Early Political Writings,* p. 9.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 20.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 22-5.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
48. *Ibid.*
49. 152 H.C. Deb. 4s., col. 844.
50. 161 H.C. Deb. 4s., col. 587.
51. Sri Aurobindo, 'The Doctrine of Passive Resistance', in his *Early Political Writings,* p. 92.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
53. See Arthur Griffith's speech at the convention held under the auspices of the National Council at the Dublin Rotunda, reproduced in *Indian Review,* July 1906, pp. 534-6, and B.G. Tilak's speech at Calcutta on 'The Tenets of the New Party', in *ibid.,* January 1907, pp. 58-60; also Arthur Griffith, *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* (London 1918 ed.), and 'The Sinn Fein Movement in Ireland', *Manchester Guardian,* 29 July 1907, reproduced in *India,* 2 August 1907. The problem of adopting more effective methods of national self-assertion was being faced by the Irish and the Indians alike at this time. Alfred Webb, the Irish president of the 1894 Congress, who had closely studied it, gave the following advice to the Indians in 1906: 'In proportion as resort to lethal powers becomes more and more impossible for countries situated as are India and Ireland, unstinted life devotion—a far higher and more difficult devotion than on the battlefield—is called for. Military power combined with the power of effective interference with individual interests was never more effectively centred in a Government in possible prevention of the assertion of free thought regarding government as it is in British power in India. The task is the more difficult for Indian self-assertion and standing up against insult and wrong. But this

self-assertion must be made. Writing and speaking alone—amiable appeals for justice—will never effect much. The demand for justice—the realisation that England has something to lose by not granting it—must be lived out in the lives of your people as in ours.' See Webb, 'Ireland and India', [Madras] *Wednesday Review,* reproduced in *India,* 14 September, 1906.

54. Sri Aurobindo, *Early Political Writings,* p. 118.
55. 'Ideals Face to Face', *Bande Mataram,* 1 May 1908, *ibid.,* p. 903.
56. *Ibid.*
57. H. and U. Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought* (Calcutta, 1958), pp. 175, 181.
58. B.C. Pal, *Swadeshi and Swaraj* (Calcutta, 1954), pp. 149-57.
59. *Ibid.,* p.162.
60. *Ibid.,* pp. 165-6.
61. *Kesari,* 22 January 1907. See also H.W. Nevinson, *New Spirit in India* (London, 1908), pp. 72, 75.
62. H. and U. Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought,* p. 37.
63. E. Bevan, *Indian Nationalism: An Independent Estimate* (London, 1913), p. 107.
64. *Ibid.,* pp. 112-14.
65. Morley to Minto, 27 July, 2 August 1906, Morley Papers.
66. 'Divided Counsels in the Congress', *The Times,* 16 October 1906.
67. *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress ...,* 1906, p. 21.
68. *Ibid.,* pp. 17-18.
69. *Ibid.,* p. 19.
70. *The Times,* 2 January 1907, thus commented on Naoroji's speech: 'Mr. Naoroji contends that, because the inhabitants of India are British citizens, they are entitled to all the political rights, privileges, and franchises which the inhabitants of England enjoy ... But the contention has no more root in history or in law than it has in common sense. We have won India by the sword, and in the last resort we hold it by the sword.' In the Khulna sedition case (1907) and the Alipore conspiracy case (1909), however, the Calcutta high court held that the demand for *'swaraj',* i.e. colonial self-government or home rule, was not sedition. See Home Pol. B, August 1907, nos. 77-91, NAI; *Indian Nation,* 19 August 1907; *Modern Review,* August 1909, p. 191.
71. *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1906,* pp. ii-iii. The reforms demanded were: simultaneous examinations for higher services in England and in India; adequate representation of Indians in the council of the secretary of state and in the exccutive councils of the viceroy and governors; the expansion of the legislative councils; increased representation of Indians thereon and larger control over administration and finance; and the extension and liberalization of local self-government.
72. *Speeches of Gopal Krishna Gokhale,* pp. 947-57. Gokhale believed that 'independence' could only be achieved through violence. See his speech before the Deccan Sabha in 1909 in *Indian Nation,* 12 July 1909.
73. See *Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (Pondicherry, 1953), pp. 78-82.
74. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* p. 17.
75. *Ibid.,* Appendix B, p. xix.
76. *Ibid.*
77. Sri Aurobindo, *Early Political Writings,* pp. 870-4.

78. *Ibid.*, pp. 902-5.
79. Gokhale to Besant, 5 January 1915, GP.
80. *Indian Social Reformer,* 5 May 1907.
81. Criticism of the ideal of colonial self-government was not confined to the Extremists. Some Moderates were privately almost as sceptical. For example, K. Natarajan, an avowed and prominent Moderate, wrote to V.S. Srinivasa Sastri on 16 July 1909 that he regarded 'this colonial model ... as an embarrassing excrescence on our programme. It exposes us on the one side to the criticism of men like Lord Morley who naturally regard the colonial model as synonymous with manhood suffrage, and cannot imagine that a country of three hundred millions—probably it will be 500 by the time—speaking a different language, professing a different religion, of a different race, controlling its own destinies, can have the same motive as the colonies—it is weak enough in their case—to stick to England as the mother country; on the other, we seem to our own countrymen as if we were attempting to fix the limit to the natural growth of the nation according to the exigencies of the immediate moment. ... The bond that binds a colony to the mother country, like that which binds mother to daughter, can never be artificially reproduced. ... How absurd it would have been if Toddar Mall had assured Akbar that India's goal was to be a colony of Arabia!' Natarajan to Sastri, 16 July 1909, Sastri Papers.
82. E. Norman, *A History of Modern Ireland* (London, 1971), p. 227.
83. Cited in M.S. Kamath, *The Home Rule Leagues* (Madras, 1918), pp. 7-9. See also *New India,* 18 October 1915.
84. N.C. Kelkar, *Home Rule and the Home Rule Leagues* (Poona, 1916), pp. 6-8.
85. *Mahratta,* 30 August 1914.
86. See below, pp. 272-81.
87. *New India,* 25 September 1915.
88. *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress ..., 1915,* p. 161.
89. *Ibid.*, pp. 115-38.
90. *Mahratta,* 30 April, 7 May 1916.
91. *New India,* 4 September 1916.
92. *Bal Gangadhar Tilak, His Speeches and Writings* (Madras, 1918), pp. 141-2.
93. *Ibid.*, pp. 142-58.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
95. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-80.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 233-5.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 217; also D.V. Tahmankar, *Lokmanya Tilak* (London, 1956), p. 286.
99. B.C. Pal, *Why I Advocate Home Rule for India* (Adyar, 1918), p. 6.
100. Cited in Judith M. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915-1922* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 27-8.
101. Home Pol. A, July 1917, nos. 299-313 & K.-W., NAI.
102. *Ibid.*
103. Viceroy to secretary of state, 18 May 1917 (telegram), *ibid.*
104. *Mahratta,* 14 July 1918; S.R. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth 1885-1929,* p. 152.
105. H.F. Owen, 'Organizing for the Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919', in R. Kumar (ed.), *Essays on Gandhian Politics* (Oxford, 1971), p. 74.

106. Judith M. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 28. See also H.F. Owen, 'Towards Nation-Wide Agitation and Organisation: The Home Rule Leagues, 1915-18', in D.A. Low (ed.), *Soundings in Modern South Asian History* (London, 1968), pp. 180-6.
107. 'Departmental (J.P.) Note on the Relations between Government and the Indian National Congress Movement', 1906, L/P & J/6/762, no. 1461, 1906, IOR.
108. Hume to Ripon, 13 January 1889, Ripon Papers.
109. Kimberley to Dufferin, 22 April 1886, Dufferin Papers.
110. H.L. Singh, *Problems and Policies of the British in India 1885-1898* (Bombay, 1963), pp. 228-9; R. Suntharalingam, *Politics and Nationalist Awakening in South India 1852-1891* (Tueson, 1974), p. 372.
111. James Bryee, then visiting India, wrote to Henry Sidgwiek on 15 February 1889: 'One of the finest fellows I met in India, a Seoteh missionary of long experienee, said to me: "The Congress is a dangerous thing although not a bad one. No inconsisteney: this might be said of the doetrine of justification by faith." One wishes that the Congres had not been started, but it would be a mistake either to try to suppress it or to show, as too many Anglo-Indians are doing, alarm and dislike.' Bryee Papers.
112. See Dufferin to Colvin, 9 Oetober 1888, and Cross to Dufferin, 28 February 1887, Dufferin Papers.
113. See Dufferin to Cross, 17 August 1888, and Dufferin to Colvin, 9 Oetober 1888, *ibid.*
114. S. Gopal, *op. cit.*, pp. 157 ff; B. Martin, *New India* (Berkeley, 1969), pp. 335-6; MeLane, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-17.
115. Col. Ardagh, private secretary to viceroy, to Hume, 1 January 1891, Lansdowne Papers.
116. *Ibid.;* also Ardagh to P. Mehta, 3 January 1891, *ibid.*
117. Lansdowne to Cross, 28 January 1891, *ibid.*
118. *Ibid.;* also Lansdowne to Cross, 25 January 1891, *ibid.*
119. Lansdowne to Lord Harris, governor of Bombay, 12 June 1893, *ibid.*
120. Lansdowne to Northbrook, 13 January 1889, *ibid.*
121. Lansdowne to Cross, 13 Mareh 1889, *ibid.*
122. See, for example, Lansdowne to Kimberley, 22 August 1893, *ibid.*
123. Ardagh to A. Godley, 8 Mareh 1892, and Cross to Lansdowne, 1 April 1892, *ibid.*
124. Gopal, *op. cit.*, p. 190.
125. Elgin to C.A. Elliott, lieutenant-governor of Bengal, 18 July 1895, Elgin Papers.
126. Elgin to Hamilton, 25 August 1896, *ibid.*
127. *Ibid.*, 27 July 1897, Hamilton Papers. Elgin added that the diffieulties of the administration were due 'to a movement that they ean no more stop than Canute could restrain the waves, to progress of edueation and the aequisition of knowledge'. *Ibid.*
128. *Ibid.*, 21 April 1897, Elgin Papers.
129. *Ibid.*, 23 December 1897, *ibid.*
130. Hamilton to Curzon, 20 Oetober 1899, Curzon Papers.
131. Hamilton to Elgin, 14 May 1897, Elgin Papers.
132. Elgin to Hamilton, 27 July 1897, Hamilton Papers.
133. Curzon to Ampthill, 15 June 1903, Curzon Papers.
134. Curzon to Wedderburn, 31 October 1900, *ibid.*
135. *Ibid.*, 15 August 1902, *ibid.*
136. Curzon to Hamilton, 8 November 1900, *ibid.*
137. Hamilton to Curzon, 22 February 1900; also 13 December 1900 and 24 January 1901, *ibid.*

138. Morley to Minto, 11 May 1906, and Minto to Morley, 9 May 1906, Morley Papers.
139. Morley to Minto, 6 June 1906, *ibid.*
140. Mehrotra, *Towards India's Freedom and Partition* (New Delhi, 1979), pp. 119-21.
141. Morley to Minto, 31 October 1907. Morley Papers.
142. Mehrotra, *Towards India's Freedom and Partition,* pp. 120-1.
143. See Hardinge to Chirol, 5 January 1911; Chirol to Hardinge, 12, 20 January 1911, 4 June 1914, Hardinge Papers.
144. See, for example, Hardinge to Chirol, 19 January 1911; Hardinge to Chamberlain, 31 December 1914; Hardinge to Willingdon, 22 December 1915, Hardinge Papers.
145. Hardinge received a Congress deputation in early January 1911 after the Allahabad Congress of 1910. Crewe received a Congress deputation on 11 May 1914 in connexion with the reform of the India Council.
146. Lord Pentland made a brief appearance at the Madras Congress in December 1914; Lord Willingdon did the same at the Bombay provincial conference at Poona in July 1915; and James Meston was present at the Lucknow Congress in December 1916.
147. See, for example, R. Craddock's note in Home Pol. B, June 1907, no. 3, NAI.
148. For the severe restrictions imposed by the Bombay government on Tilak after his release in the summer of 1914, see Willingdon to Crewe, 25 June, 15, 30 July 1914, and Tilak to Keir Hardie, 7 July 1914, encl. Keir Hardie to Crewe, 27 July 1914, Crewe Papers.
149. 'Asiaticus' (Lovat Fraser) wrote in 1915: 'The attitude adopted by the [British] Administration towards Gokhale was, and still is, a good deal of puzzle to me. He was generally dogged and reported on like any bomb-thrower, one might almost say, like any pickpocket. I do not understand a policy which could let Gokhale sit for hours together in the most implicit confidence, adopt his suggestions, and then dog his steps from the portals of the India Office.' 'Indian Aspirations', *National Review,* April 1915, pp. 314-15.
150. Hardinge to Clarke, 16/19 April 1912; also Hardinge to Carmichael, 2 August 1912; Hardinge to Willingdon, 9 November 1913, Hardinge Papers.
151. See Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth,* pp. 61-3.
152. See Montagu to Crewe, 1, 2 July 1912, Crewe Papers; Crewe to Hardinge, 28 June, 5 July 1912, Hardinge Papers.
153. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth,* p. 58.
154. *Ibid.,* pp. 58-9.
155. William Archer, *India and the Future* (London, 1917), p. 295.
156. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth,* p. 62.
157. *Ibid.,* p. 63.
158. *Ibid.,* pp. 71-2; also *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress ..., 1915,* pp. 23-30.
159. H.L. Deb. 5s., cols. 266-7; Chelmsford to Chamberlain, 23 September 1916; Chelmsford to Selborne, 17 October 1918, Chelmsford Papers; 'Memorandum by Crewe on Indian Reform', 25 September 1917, Crewe Papers.
160. Hardinge to Chamberlain, 31 December 1915, Hardinge Papers.
161. *Ibid.,* 21 January 1916, *ibid.*
162. Crewe to Hardinge, 7 May 1915, Crewe Papers.
163. Wedderburn to Basu, 25 October 1916, Basu Papers; see also Chamberlain to Hardinge, 29 October, 8 December 1915, Hardinge Papers; Chamberlain to Chelmsford, 1, 27 November 1916, Chelmsford Papers.

164. The rebellion in Dublin at Easter, 1916, which was ruthlessly suppressed by the British government and left a terrible legacy of bitterness.
165. Basu to Charles Roberts, 21 November 1916, Basu Papers.
166. See Mehrotra, *The Commonwealth and the Nation* (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 83 ff.
167. *Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council,* 1916-17, vol. lv, pp. 45-6, 51.
168. The memorandum is reproduced in V. Srinivasa Sastri, *Self-Government for India under the British Flag* (Allahabad, 1916), Appendix I, pp. i-vii. Its proposals were later incorporated in the Congress-League scheme.
169. Government of India Dispatch, Home Pol., 24 November 1917, no. 17, Chamberlain Papers.
170. In August 1916 the United States Congress passed the famous Jones Act (named after its sponsor William Atkinson Jones), which in its preamble contained an assurance that the Philippines would be granted ultimate independence as soon as stable government was established. The United States was thus the first imperial power to promise self-government to a colonial territory.
171. *Times of India,* 30 December 1916, 1-2 January 1917.
172. Meston to Chelmsford, 11 January 1917, Chelmsford Papers. Meston's suggestion for a conference—on the model of the Irish convention—with the representatives of the Congress and the League was, however, turned down by the viceroy's council. See Home Pol. D, May 1917, no. 3, NAI.
173. Willingdon to Chelmsford, 27 June, 8, 18 July 1916, Chelmsford Papers.
174. Chelmsford to Chamberlain, 19 January 1917, *ibid.*
175. Chamberlain to Chelmsford, 16 August 1916, *ibid.*
176. Ronaldshay to Chelmsford, 13 August 1917, *ibid.*
177. Chamberlain to Chelmsford, 18 April, 8 May 1917, *ibid.*
178. *Ibid.,* 2 May 1917, *ibid.* As late as 27 November 1916 Chamberlain was writing to Chelmsford: 'It is this fear that, unless we can throw some plank to them, the Moderates would be swept away in the approaching Congress that has caused so many people to press me to make some declaration. I am not convinced that they are right ... .' *Ibid.,* 27 November 1916, *ibid.* But on 2 May 1917 Chamberlain wrote to Chelmsford: 'I am coming round to your view that a statement of our object is necessary.' *Ibid.*
179. Telegram from viceroy to secretary of state, Home Department, 18 May 1917, Home Pol. A, July 1917, nos. 299-313 & K.-W., NAI.
180. For the controversy over the use of the term 'self-government' in the British cabinet, see Mehrotra, *The Commonwealth and the Nation,* p. 157, note 91; Richard Danzig, 'The Announcment of August 20th, 1917', *Journal of Asian Studies,* November 1968, pp. 19-37; Peter Robb, 'The British Cabinet and Indian Reform, 1917-19', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* May 1976, pp. 318-34; and A. Rumbold, *Watershed in India 1914-1922* (London, 1979), pp. 85-98.
181. A royal commission which inquired into the mismanagement of the campaign in Mesopotamia revealed a very disquieting state of affairs, particularly where the medical services were concerned, and accused the government of India of administrative inefficiency. There was never any suggestion that blame attached to Austen Chamberlain, but he was secretary of state for India, and as it was his department which was involved he felt it to be his duty to resign.

182. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth,* p. 93.
183. H.C. Deb. 5s., col. 2205.
184. *Ibid.*, cols. 2209-10.
185. *The Times,* 18 July 1917.
186. *Times of India,* 30 July1917.
187. See telegrams from viceroy to secretary of state, 18 May, 11 June, 6, 10, 16 July 1917, and telegram from viceroy to prime minister, 16 July 1917, Montagu Papers; also 26 H.L. Deb. 5s., col. 768 and 31 H.L. Deb. 5s., col. 597.
188. Chelmsford to Montagu, 19 July 1917, Chelmsford Papers.
189. *Ibid.*, 7 August 1917, *ibid.*
190. 'Indian Reforms', memorandum, dated 30 July 1917, copy enclosed with Montagu's letter to Austen Chamberlain, 7 August 1917, Chamberlain Papers; also available in the Montagu Papers.
191. Montagu to Chamberlain, 7 August 1917, and encl. *op. cit.*, p. 2, *ibid.*
192. 'Indian Reforms', *op. cit.*, p. 3, *ibid.*
193. Montagu to Chamberlain, 7 August 1917, *ibid.*
194. Lord Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon* (London, 1928), vol. iii, p. 168.
195. *Ibid.*, p. 167.
196. 97 H.C. Deb. 5s., cols. 1695-6.
197. *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (1918), Cd. 9109, p. 5.
198. The phrase is Lord Milner's. See his *Nation and the Empire* (London, 1913), p. 289. For further discussion on this subject, see Mehrotra, *The Commonwealth and the Nation,* pp. 18-32.
199. A.E. Zimmern, *The Third British Empire* (Oxford, 1934).
200. *Bengalee,* 22 August 1917.
201. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 22 August 1917. See also *Hindu,* 21 August 1917, and *Mahratta,* 26 August 1917.
202. Chamberlain to Chelmsford, 16 March 1917, Chelmsford Papers.
203. *Ibid.*, 29 March 1917, *ibid.*

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 77.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-8.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 81-2.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
8. *Indian Mirror,* 21 January 1888; also A.C. Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution* (Madras, 1917), Appendix A, pp. xvi-xxi. Surprisingly enough, these 'tentative rules' are not included in the Congress report of the year.
9. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 162.
10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*
12. *Indian Mirror,* 21 January 1888.
13. See letter from the secretary of the British Indian Association, dated 6 December 1888, to the general secretary of the National Congress Committee, *Publications of the British Indian Association,* vol. vi, pp. 10-13, British Indian Association, Calcutta. For similar objections raised by the British Indian Association in 1896, see the editorial of the *Hindoo Patriot,* 5 October 1896, entitled 'Is the Congress an Institution?'
14. *Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1889,* pp. 63-4. The resolution also decided that 'henceforth the number of delegates to be allowed from each Congress Circle be limited to five per million of the total population of the Circle'; that from the date of Hume's departure for England, Ajudhianath be appointed joint general secretary and that Rs 5000 be voted for the expenses of his office; that W.C. Bonnerjee, P.M. Mehta and P.A. Charlu be appointed standing counsel of the Congress for Bengal, Bombay and Madras respectively; that the appointment of W. Wedderburn, W.S. Caine, W.S. Bright McLaren, J.E. Ellis, Dadabhai Naoroji, George Yule and William Digby (with power to add to their number) as a committee to direct the operations of the 'Congress Agency' in England be confirmed and that a sum of Rs 45,000 be raised for the expenses of Congress work in India and in England; and that a delegation consisting of George Yule, Hume, J. Adam, E. Norton, P.M. Mehta, S.N. Banerjea, M.M. Ghose, Shurfuddin, R.N. Mudholkar, J.E. Howard, and W.C. Bonnerjee should visit England.
15. *Tribune,* 13 December 1893.
16. *Ibid.,* 5 September 1901.
17. See *ibid.,* 18 April 1894, 5 September, 1901.
18. See below, p. 199.
19. *Report of the Tenth Indian National Congress ..., 1894,* p. 28.
20. *Ibid.,* pp. 29-30.
21. *Ibid.,* pp. 60, 68-9.
22. *Ibid.,* p. 157.
23. The full text of the 1895 draft constitution is prinfted in *Statesman,* 27 December 1895.
24. *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress ..., 1895,* p. 28.
25. *Ibid.,* p. 59.
26. *Ibid.,* pp. 59-60.
27. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 26, 27, 29 September, 2, 3, 10, 22, 29 October, 13, 27 November, 19, 22, 26 December 1896. See also M.L. Ghose to M.G. Ranade, 10 October 1896, encl. M.G. Ranade to D.E. Wacha, 11 November 1896, Mehta Papers.
28. *Bengalee,* 26 September, 3, 10 October, 14 November 1896. See also S.N. Banerjee to P.M. Mehta, 11 November 1896, Mehta Papers.
29. *Hindoo Patriot,* 1, 3 October 1896.
30. *Ibid.,* 9 November 1896.
31. *Hindu,* 23 November 1896.
32. *Bengalee,* 9 January 1897.
33. *Indian Mirror,* 5 January 1897.
34. *Mahratta,* 23 January 1898.
35. Sri Aurobindo, *Early Political Writings,* p. 16.
36. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 7 April 1899.

37. *Report of the Fourteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1898,* p. 132.
38. *Ibid.,* p. 35.
39. *Ibid.,* p. 127; also Introduction, p. xxvi.
40. *Ibid.,* pp. 126, 132.
41. *Ibid.,* pp. 126-32. The *Mahratta* welcomed the decision of the 1898 Congress and suggested that Congressmen should not rest until they had given 'a fuller constitution' to the organization. The *Mahratta* also underlined the fact that because of the want of a central committee in India, which might keep the different Congress circles in touch with the British Committee, and also on account of the debts being accumulated year after year without equitable adjustment and admission of liability by the different Congress circles, the pecuniary relations of the Congress in India and the Committee in England were somewhat anomalous and unsatisfactory. See *Mahratta,* 8 January 1899.
42. *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1899,* p. 29.
43. *Ibid.,* pp. 30-2.
44. *Ibid.,* p. 86.
45. *Ibid.*
46. *Ibid.,* p. 37.
47. *Ibid.,* p. 86.
48. *Ibid.,* p. 86. Panjab Congressmen were obviously not satisfied with this constitution. Speaking as chairman of the reception committee of the 1900 Congress at Lahore, K.P. Roy observed: 'It is high time that the Congress should have a constitution of its own. Nothing can live and flourish without a good and sound constitution. It has now arrived at a stage when it has become necessary to give it a good constitution so that it may extend its sphere of usefulness and may enjoy a long lease of life. It must work for the whole year through the different provinces of India, collate [*sic*] facts and reasons, figures and statistics, take a note of important grievances and suggest remedies and finally submit them embodied in reports for the consideration of the Congress. The Lucknow Congress aided by some of the delegates of this province has given us a bare skeleton of the Congress constitution, but it requires to be filled up with flesh and blood. I hope, brother delegates, you will give your special attention to this matter and I pray that your efforts in this direction may be crowned with success.' *Report of the Sixteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1900,* pp. 5-6.
49. The drafting committee had originally proposed that the Indian Congress Committee should consist 'of 30 members elected upon the recommendations of the delegates of the respective provinces in Congress assembled'. *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress..., 1899,* p. 29.
50. The drafting committee had also originally provided that 'The Committee shall make its own rules for the conduct of business.' This was later omitted in the final draft. *Ibid.,* pp. 30, 85.
51. *Ibid.,* pp. xxviii-xxx, 85-6.
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Mahratta,* 21 October 1900.
54. *Ibid.,* 30 December 1900.
55. *Report of the Sixteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1900,* pp. 105-6.
56. *Tribune,* 1 October 1901, 11 February 1902.

57. *Ibid.,* 11 February 1902; C.Y. Chintamani, 'The Seventeenth Indian National Congress', *Madras Review,* February 1902, pp. 87-9; Naoroji to Mehta, 9 August 1901, Mehta Papers.
58. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 6 January 1902; also *Indian Mirror,* 18 January 1902.
59. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 10 January 1902.
60. For the full text, see *Hindu,* 21 August 1902.
61. This was an obvious reference to the British Committee's operations.
62. A. Nundy, 'The Troubles of the National Congress', *East & West,* December 1903, p. 1407.
63. *Swadeshmitran,* quoted in *Tribune,* 18 January 1902.
64. *Tribune,* 18 January 1902.
65. *Ibid.,* 23 January 1902.
66. *Indian Mirror,* 18 January 1902.
67. Quoted in *Tribune,* 11 February 1902.
68. *Indian Nation,* 10 November 1902.
69. *Tribune,* 13 December 1902.
70. See p. 66 above.
71. *Report of the Eighteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1902,* Appendix.
72. *Tribune,* 23 April 1903.
73. *Ibid.,* 22 September, 10 October 1903; also p. 203 below.
74. *Ibid.,* 23 April 1903.
75. *Ibid.*
76. See, for example, *Indian Social Reformer,* 20 September 1903; *Tribune,* 22 September 1903.
77. *Tribune,* 6 October 1903.
78. *Hindu,* 14 December 1903.
79. *Report of the Nineteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1903,* Introduction, p. xvi.
80. *Ibid.,* p. 11.
81. *Ibid.,* p. 8.
82. Hume wrote to Wedderburn on 30 January 1906: 'As to Mehta's attitude—it is only what might have been expected from the absolute supremacy that he has now for many years enjoyed in Western India. He is, and always has been, very self-willed.' Encl. Wedderburn to Gokhale, 9 February 1906, GP.
83. See, for example, *Gujarati,* 3, 10, 17 January 1904, and Wacha to Gokhale, 2 January 1904, GP.
84. See, for example, *Mahratta,* 17 January, 7 February 1904, and *Tribune,* 2 January 1904.
85. *Report of the Nineteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1903,* pp. 146-7.
86. *Ibid.,* p. 147.
87. *Panjabee,* 12 December 1904.
88. See *Indian Mirror,* 23-4 December 1904.
89. *Panjabee,* 19 December 1904.
90. *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress ..., 1904,* p. 231.
91. *Panjabee,* 6 March 1905.
92. Speaking as chairman of the reception committee of the 1904 Congress at Bombay, Mehta had said: 'It would be absurd to say that the Congress meets to deliberate and discuss and decide all the important subjects with which it deals. That task must be, and is largely performed in the course of the year by such institutions as we may possess for forming

Indian opinion in the common intercourse of social life, in local bodies more or less active, in the Native Press, which is undoubtedly daily growing more and more capable and potent. At the end of the year, we all meet together from different parts of the country, representatives of the people ... I say, we Delegates, representatives of the people, meet together at the end of the year to give voice to the opinion of the country taking shape and formulating throughout the year, to present our Petition of Rights, our Grand Remonstrance... .' *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress ..., 1904,* pp. 8-9.

93. *Tribune,* 6 February 1905.
94. *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress ..., 1905,* p. 96.
95. *Indian Mirror,* 21 July 1906.
96. *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1906,* p. 132.
97. *Ibid.,* pp. 132-6.
98. The recommendations of the standing committee appointed at the Banaras Congress had also included the following alternative method of selecting the president of the Congress: 'The Reception Committee, organized as above, should consult the several Provincial Congress Committees, and if the person recommended by a majority of these Committees is accepted by the Reception Committee, he should be elected President. If, however, the recommendation of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is not acceptable to the Reception Committee, the question should be referred to the Central Standing Committee of the Congress, the decision of this Committee being final.' *Ibid.,* p. 134.
99. *Ibid.,* pp. iv-v, 133-4.
100. See G.K. Gokhale to V.K. Iyer, 29 September 1906, GP.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1906,* pp. 132-4.
103. *Ibid.,* pp. 134-6.
104. *Ibid.,* p. 135.
105. *Ibid.,* pp. 135-6.
106. See above, p. 155.
107. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Introduction, pp. ii-iii.
108. *Ibid.,* p. iii.
109. *Ibid.,* 'Proceedings of the Convention Held at Surat on the 28th December 1907', p. 17.
110. *Ibid.,* p. 18. In his presidential address to the Calcutta Congress in 1890 Mehta had described the Congress as 'an unconventional Convention of the Empire'. See *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. 5.
111. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* 'Proceedings of the Convention Held at Surat on the 28th December 1907', p. 18.
112. *Ibid.*
113. *Ibid.*
114. *Ibid.*
115. *Ibid.,* pp. 18-19.
116. *Ibid.,* p. 19.
117. For information about the proceedings of the Convention Committee, see G. Johnson, *op. cit.,* pp. 175-6.
118. Motilal Nehru to Jawaharlal Nehru, 23 April 1908, Ravinder Kumar and D.N. Panigrahi (eds.), *Selected Works of Motilal Nehru* (New Delhi, 1982) vol. i, p. 137.

119. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* Appendix B, p. xxvi.
120. *Ibid.,* pp. xxvi-xxx.
121. *Indian Social Reformer,* 13 September 1908.
122. Gokhale to Annie Besant, 21 November 1914, GP.
123. C.R. Reddy to Gokhale, 27 May 1908, *ibid.*
124. Gokhale to Wedderburn, 30 June 1910, *ibid.*
125. *Times of India,* quoted in *Mahratta,* 1 January 1911.
126. Gokhale to Wedderburn, 24 September 1909, GP.
127. *Beharee,* quoted in *Hindu,* 3 January 1913.
128. *Ibid.*
129. B.N. Basu to Gokhale, 21 December 1914, GP.
130. *Report of the Twenty-Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1910,* pp. 28-9.
131. Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, GP.
132. *Ibid.*
133. *Report of the Twenty-Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1910,* p. 103.
134. Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, GP.
135. *Ibid.* R.P. Karandikar, who was present at the meetings, recorded in his diary that though the resolution was carried in the subjects committee at Calcutta, it was accompanied by 'quite a scene. Wacha walks out "I wash my hands of the Congress". Bhupendranath Basu "I have nothing to do with the Congress". Gokhale sits down in disgust.' Karandikar Diary, 27 December 1911, Karandikar Papers, Poona, quoted in Gordon Johnson, *op. cit.,* p. 184.
136. *Report of the Twenty-Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1911,* p. 54.
137. *Ibid.,* Appendix A, p. 5.
138. See above, p. 178.
139. *Report of the Twenty-Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1911,* p. 91.
140. Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, GP.
141. *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1912,* p. 119.
142. *See Report of the Twenty-Ninth Indian National Congress ..., 1914,* Appendix A, p. 148.
143. Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, GP.
144. See Gokhale to B.N. Basu, 25 December 1914, *ibid.*
145. See below, p. 281.
146. *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress ..., 1915,* Appendix D, p. 194.
147. *Report of the Twenty-Ninth Indian National Congress ..., 1914,* p. 129.
148. Bombay Police Abstracts, vol. xxix, 1916: Bombay, 6 January 1916, quoted in Gordon Johnson, *op. cit.,* pp. 190-1. See also *Bombay Chronicle,* 27 December 1915, *Leader,* 29 December 1915, and *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress ..., 1915,* 'Introduction', pp. xx-xxi.
149. *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress ..., 1915,* pp. 160-1.
150. *Ibid.,* pp. 161, 194.
151. B.G. Tilak, *A Step in the Steamer* (Bombay, 1918), p. 36.
152. See below, pp. 288-90.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. 'Editorial Survey', *Kayastha Samachar,* September-October 1902, p. 343. Hume remarked that 'as a matter of fact, it is ten times more difficult to get anything through the Congress

(at least on which public opinion is not absolutely unanimous) than through the English House of Commons'. 'Indtroduction', *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 26.

2. *Report of the Nineteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1903,* p. 8.
3. *Indian Spectator,* 3 January 1886; also letter of K.T. Telang to editor, *The Times,* in *Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress ..., 1885,* Appendix D, pp. 163-4. W.C. Bonnerjee later claimed that 'it was to a great extent on my advocacy that the Congress leaders agreed to leave out social questions from the movement and make it a purely political one'. See Bonnerjee, 'A Call to Arms', III, *Hindustan Review and Kayastha Samachar,* December 1903, p. 478, and note 54 to chapter 1.
4. *Report of the Second Indian National Congress ..., 1886,* p. 54.
5. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 74.
6. *Ibid.,* pp. 74-5.
7. *Ibid.,* p. 4.
8. *Ibid.,* p. 6.
9. *Hindu,* 23 December 1890.
10. *Ibid.,* 19 January, 3 February 1891.
11. *Ibid.,* 7 January 1891.
12. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* pp. 3-4.
13. *Hindu,* 12 December 1890.
14. *Ibid.,* 29 December 1890.
15. *Ibid.,* 26 March 1891. Criticizing the views of M.M. Ghose, chairman of the Calcutta Congress reception committee, the *Hindu* had written on 6 January 1891: 'We attach absolutely no value to artificial unanimity in its [Congress's] conclusions. Let there be two parties in the Congress, one representing those that think that social reforms should be considered by the Congress and the other taking Mr. Ghose's view.'
16. *Mahratta,* 22 March 1891.
17. In a stirring message to Congressmen from England in late August 1891, Hume had remarked that 'people write to me and say, we fear that in consequence of our differences over the Age of Consent Bill many will hold back this year from the Congress. I decline to believe that there are many such "fools"; a few there may be—by all means, let them go—but *many* there are not, or the people of India have retrograded, pitiably, in the scale of intelligence and commonsense (in which no nation had a higher position) during the last twelve months. What, give up the organisation and instrument with which we can force the hands of our opponents, and bring the English people to compel them to do India justice? And why? Because we, amongst ourselves, have disagreed in regard to the details of a certain semi-religious, semi-social question. This would be indeed playing into the hands of our adversaries—it would be cutting of our noses to spite our faces. Whatever we may think of the age of consent question, and every shade of opinion on this point is to be found amongst us, we are all agreed as to wanting representation, a larger share in the administration of our own country, simultaneous examinations, separation of judicial and executive functions, reduction of the salt duty, local option in excise matters, reform in the police, and so on, and will any sane man tell me that any considerable portion of our thoughtful, cautious community are going to hold aloof from the only channel through which all the essential reforms can be made to flow—a channel already so nearly completed

that even now some few drops of comfort have been triekling through—and all for what? beeause we have differed as to whether marriages may or may not be eonsummated below twelve years of age—a stupendous question truly and such a praetieal one: seeing that law or no law, not one marriage in a hundred, taking the country as a whole, is eonsummated below twelve. No, no, I was very glad to see the vigour and earnestness with whieh the question was fought on both sides. India always wants stirring—the elimate (the best in the world) unfortunately inclines all to the *dolce far niente* attitude—we sorely want something to keep us awake during the reeess—I mean between Congresses—and nothing eould have been better—in the way of national training than this vigorous set-to amongst ourselves—but now that this is over, and both sides have failed to win (for none of us think that the Government have passed the measure in the right form), all who are not devoid of that eommonsense with whieh India's people have ever been eredited, will once more join forees to fight in real earnest, our eommon adversaries, to protest with renewed energy against our eommon disabilities, and struggle with inereased determination for our eommon enfranchisement. So, don't let any one write to me any more doleful letters about the great disruption—there is no disruption—we had a little set-to, *pour passer le temps* amongst us, by way of praetiee; but this over we are not sueh fools as to fall into our opponents' wiles, and let this prevent our now joining to piteh into *them.* I would only believe in sueh idioey on the part of any considerable seetion of our number, by seeing it, and see it, I *never* shall. On the eontrary, Age of Consent Bill or no Age of Consent Bill, this next Congress is going to be one of the best and most representative we have ever had; is going to drive the wedge that we have already got in, right up to the head. I say so, and you had all best believe it, and if you value your own rights and liberties, if you have any eare for the future of your ehildren, if you have any lingering love for your eountry and her destiny, you will all get to work to make my prophecy a true one, and unless I am utterly mistaken in you all, you *will.* You are an awful bad lot to get money out of—blood is got easier out of many stones—but when the time comes, you ean and will *work.* No set of men better or more earnestly. You eannot, of eourse, be always at red heat—like a eomet, you go off periodieally into spaee and beeome almost invisible, but as returning in your orbit you approach the sun of the Congress, you blaze out as brightly as ever, to the disgust and surprise of our bureaueratie astronomers, who fondly trusted they had seen the last of new India and its burning elaims. Now, this year, let the blaze be speeially bright—an omen to both Nations of the Grand, though bloodless, Revolution that we are as eertainly going to effeet, as truth and justice are, to triumph over falsehood and wrong.' Hume to C. Narayan Swami Nayadu, ehairman of Nagpur Congress reeeption eommittee, 28 August 1891, reprodueed in seeretary of the standing Congress eommittee, Central Provinees, Nagpur, to M. Viraraghava Chari, seeretary of the standing Congress eommittee, Madras, 26 September 1891, Indian Assoeiation reeords. It was at Hume's insistence that an orthodox Hindu was ehosen to preside over the Nagpur Congress. This was obviously a gesture meant to plaeate those who felt aggrieved over the passing of the Age of Consent Bill. See Wacha to Naoroji, 10 October 1891; also Waeha to Naoroji, 3 Oetober, 21 November 1891, 2 January 1892, NP. In his letter to the seeretaries of standing Congress eommittees, dated 1 January 1892, Hume thanked Congressmen for the spirited manner in whieh they had responded to his eall and made the Nagpur Congress a sueeess, whieh showed that 'despite our recent differenees in regard to the Age of Consent Bill, there really seemed to me to be a growing sense of

brotherhood amongst the delegates, a growing determination to "fight", as Grant said, "along this line until we win"'. He advised them to 'keep up and encourage this spirit', and 'to *take permanently to heart* (for the Age of Consent Bill will not be the last matter in regard to which we shall differ amongst ourselves) ... the necessity of our ever maintaining an unbroken front towards our opponents in regard to the great question of political enfranchisement, and the leading reforms we are all agreed upon, no matter what our differences amongst ourselves on local or social matters'. Hume to secretaries, standing Congress committees, 1 January 1892, Indian Association records. For Ranade's role at the Nagpur Congress, see *Mahratta,* 10 January 1892.

18. Letter, dated 1 November 1895, reproduced in *Mahratta,* 3 November 1895.
19. *Ibid.*, 27 October and 10 November 1895.
20. *Ibid.*, 27 October 1895.
21. *Ibid.*, 24 November 1895.
22. *Report of the Third Indian National Congress ..., 1887,* p. 160.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
24. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 174. The last part of the resolution was the result of the insistence by Congress leaders like Telang that on no account should the Congress give up its stand on representative institutions and simultaneous examinations. See *ibid.*, pp. 170-4; also Wacha to Tyabji, 23 February 1888, Tyabji Papers.
25. *Report of the Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1888,* p. 171.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
28. *Report of the Sixth Indian National Congress ..., 1890,* p. vii.
29. Hume, 'To Every Member of the Congress Party', 16 February 1892, *Times of India,* 30 March 1892; also *Mahratta,* 3 April 1892, and *India,* 13 May 1892.
30. See Patricia Hollis (ed.), *Class and Conflict in Nineteenth-Century England, 1815-1850* (London, 1973), pp. 55-6.
31. *India,* 13 May 1892.
32. Bishambharnath to Hume, 23 February 1892, *ibid.*
33. Hume to Bishambharnath, 24 (?) February 1892, *ibid.*
34. Telegram from Bishambharnath to Hume, ? February 1892, *ibid.*
35. *India,* 13 May 1892; Wacha to Naoroji, 19 March, 2 April 1892, NP.
36. Hume to secretaries, standing Congress committees, 16 March 1892, *Pioneer,* 29 May 1892, *Mahratta,* 5 June 1892.
37. *Ibid.*
38. See *Times of India,* 30 March 1892.
39. *The Times,* 31 March 1892; *India,* 13 May 1892.
40. See extracts from Anglo-Indian papers in *Times of India,* 4 April 1892, and *India,* 13 May 1892.
41. See extracts in *Indian Spectator,* 10 April 1892.
42. *Kesari,* 5 April 1892; *Amrita Bazar Patrika, 3* April 1892.
43. See, for example, *Statesman* 2 April 1892, and *Indian Spectator,* 3 April 1892.
44. Wacha to Naoroji, 2 April 1892, NP.
45. *Ibid.;* also *Times of India,* 1 April 1892.

46. C.A. Elliott, lieutenant-governor of Bengal, to Lansdowne 2 March 1892, and Col. Ardagh, private secretary to viceroy, to A. Godley, under-secretary, India Office, 8 March 1892, Lansdowne Papers.
47. Cross to Lansdowne, 1 April 1892, *ibid.*
48. Minutes Books, vol. 2, meeting dated 1 April 1892; also *India,* 13 May 1892.
49. *Ibid.*
50. Naoroji wrote to Wacha on 8 April 1892: 'I am distressed to have had to sign that letter after what Hume had done for us.' NP.
51. Minutes Books, vol. 2, meeting dated 1 April 1892. Adam was vice-president of the Madras standing Congress committee, and was then on a visit to England.
52. *India,* 13 May 1892.
53. H.C. Deb. 4s., cols. 1354-5.
54. *The Times,* 29 April 1892; *India,* 13 May 1892.
55. Wacha to Naoroji, 19, 26 March, 2, 23 April 1892, NP.
56. Minutes Books, vol. 2, meetings dated 8, 26 April, 10, 17 May 1892. For some information about the contents of this draft Introduction, see the London Correspondent of the *Hindu* (Digby), in *Hindu,* 23 December 1903.
57. See *The Tenth Indian National Congress. Purity and Politics. An Appeal to All Friends of India* (Madras, 1895); *Indian Social Reformer,* 29 December 1894; extracts from Indian papers in *Indian Spectator,* 10 February 1895; M. Viraraghava Chariar to Naoroji, 3 January 1895, NP; A. Nundy to editor, *Tribune,* 2 March 1895; McLane, *op. cit.,* pp. 127-8.
58. *Indian Social Reformer,* 9 January 1898.
59. *Ibid.,* 16 January 1898.
60. See S. Nair to P.M. Mehta, 18 December 1898, Mehta Papers; also *Mahratta,* 8 January 1899.
61. S. Nair to Mehta, 18 December 1898, Mehta Papers.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Indian Social Reformer,* 8 January 1899; Wolpert, *op. cit.,* p. 126.
64. See *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 8 April 1899; *Indian Mirror,* 22 April 1899; McLane, *op. cit.,* pp. 153-4.
65. *Dnyan Prakash,* 26 April 1900, in RNP, Bombay, 28 April 1900.
66. *Tribune,* 19 December 1899, 11 January 1900, 19 January 1901; *Bengalee,* 30 December 1900; *Report of the Sixteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1900,* p. 70; Barrier, *op. cit.,* pp. 67-8.
67. See above, pp. 161-7.
68. *Report of the Nineteenth Indian National Congress ..., 1903,* p. 11.
69. R. Michels, *Political Parties* (New York, 1959), *passim.*
70. *Mahratta,* 13 November 1887.
71. *Indian Mirror,* 8 January 1890.
72. *Mahratta,* 15 November 1891.
73. *Ibid.,* 29 November 1891.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.,* 27 October 1895.
76. Reproduced in *Indian Social Reformer,* 13 January 1901.

77. 'The Parting of the Ways', *ibid.,* 15 December 1901. For Lajpat Rai's article, see 'The Forthcoming Indian National Congress—Some Suggestions', *Kayastha Samachar,* November 1901, pp. 376-85.
78. *Hindu,* 23 October 1902.
79. *Indian Social Reformer,* 11 January 1903.
80. Quoted in *ibid.*
81. *Tribune,* 22 September 1903.
82. *Ibid.,* 10 October 1903.
83. M. Viraraghava Chariar to P.M. Mehta, 10 November 1903, Mehta Papers.
84. D.E. Wacha to G.K. Gokhale, 2 January 1904, GP; see also *Gujarati,* 3, 17 January 1904.
85. H.N. Apte to G.K. Gokhale, 6 January 1904, GP.
86. *Mahratta,* 17 January 1904.
87. *Ibid.,* 7 February 1904.
88. See Wacha to Gokhale, 15 October 1904, GP.
89. Naoroji to Tilak, 2 November 1904, *ibid.*
90. B.G. Tilak to D. Naoroji, 6 December 1904, reproduced in M.D. Vidwans (ed.), *Letters of Lokamanya Tilak* (Poona, 1966), pp. 252-4.
91. At one time it was hoped that W.C. Bonnerjee, A.O. Hume and D. Naoroji would also accompany Wedderburn to the Bombay Congress in December 1904, but the idea was given up because of the bad health of Bonnerjee and Hume.
92. *Report of the Twentieth Indian National Congress ..., 1904,* p. 29.
93. *Ibid.,* p. 7.
94. *Ibid.,* pp. 8-9. Cotton made the same point when he said in his presidential address: 'It is our function at the annual meetings of the Indian National Congress to give united and authoritative expression to views on which there is already a consensus of opinion in the country.' *Ibid.,* p. 27.
95. Wacha to Gokhale, 28 October 1905, GP.
96. *Ibid.*
97. *Panjabee,* 13 December 1905.
98. See N.V. Gokhale to G.K. Gokhale, 22 December 1905, GP.
99. See encl. Wacha to Gokhale, 15 December 1905, *ibid.*
100. J.N. Ray and others to president, Indian National Congress, 27 December 1905, GP.
101. *Indian Empire,* cited in *Panjabee,* 10 January 1906.
102. *Report of the Twenty-First Indian National Congress ..., 1905,* p. 70.
103. V.C. Joshi (ed.), *Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings* (Delhi, 1965), pp. 110-11. See also Lajpat Rai, *Young India* (Delhi, 1965 ed.), pp. 140-1.
104. *Hindu,* 9 October 1906.
105. Gokhale to V.K. Iyer, 29 September 1906, GP.
106. Banerjea to Naoroji, 7 September 1906, NP; Banerjea and Basu to Naoroji, 13 September 1906, *ibid.;* Wacha to Naoroji, 10 September 1906, *ibid.;* D.P. Ghose to Naoroji, 20 September 1906, *ibid.* Naoroji, however, insisted that he should be formally elected by the standing committees. See Banerjea to C. Vijiaraghavachariar, 6 October 1906, Vijiaraghavachariar Papers.
107. Gokhale to V.K. Iyer, 29 September 1906, GP.
108. Tilak to Naoroji, 21 September 1906, NP.

109. *Hindu,* 16, 17, 21 November 1906.
110. *Ibid.,* 2, 7 November 1906.
111. See *Panjabee,* 22 December 1906.
112. Khaparde Diary, 12 June 1906, Khaparde Papers.
113. *Panjabee,* 11 July 1906.
114. Wacha to Gokhale, 21 July 1906, GP.
115. Cited in Wedderburn to Gokhale, 8 August 1906, *ibid.*
116. *Ibid.*
117. Wedderburn, quoted in Wacha to Gokhale, 21 July 1906, *ibid.*
118. *Ibid.*
119. Wacha to Gokhale, 27 July 1906, *ibid.*
120. Encl. Wedderburn to Gokhale, 23 August 1906, *ibid.* Tilak sent a 'mild and conciliatory' reply to Wedderburn. See Wedderburn to Gokhale, 10 October 1906, *ibid.*
121. *Mahratta,* 28 October 1906.
122. *Ibid.,* 23 December 1906.
123. R.N. Mudholkar to Gokhale, 14 December 1906, GP.
124. Khaparde Diary, 31 December 1906, Khaparde Papers.
125. *Ibid.* At the Banaras Congress in 1905 the younger and more radical Congressmen had met in a conference in order to plan their future course of action, but they did not function as a separate group at the session. Lajpat Rai recorded later: 'In the Congress camp [at Banaras in 1905], the younger generation had met in open conference to discuss their future programme. It was then that Mr. Tilak gave out the idea of passive resistance. No formal resolutions were passed, but the better mind of the people present decided to inaugurate an era of self-help and self-reliance based on an active boycott of government service and of the semi-government institutions.' Lajpat Rai, *Young India,* p. 141.
126. Khaparde Diary, 31 December 1906, Khaparde Papers.
127. 'The New Party at the Last Congress', *New India,* reproduced in *Mahratta,* 20 January 1907.
128. Khaparde Diary, 24 December 1906, Khaparde Papers.
129. *Ibid.,* 31 December 1906, *ibid.*
130. 'The extremists are in the ascendant and they outnumber the moderates.' Motilal Nehru to Jawaharlal Nehru, 27 December 1906, Ravinder Kumar and D.N. Panigrahi (eds.), *op. cit.,* vol. 1, p. 115.
131. V.C. Joshi (ed.) *Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings,* p. 114.
132. 'Mr. Tilak and his colleagues ..., though they pushed the matter very far did not push it to extremity, and although during the discussion in the Subjects Committee [over the boycott resolution] Bepin Babu left the meeting with a number of his adherents, the Grand Old Man's persuasions and entreaties ultimately prevailed, and Mr. Tilak wisely averted the threatened split by consenting to the peace-making amendment proposed by Lala Lajpat Rai.' *Panjabee,* 16 January 1907. See also *Indian Mirror,* 4 January 1907.
133. *Indian Mirror,* 30 December 1906.
134. Quoted in *Mahratta,* 6 January 1907.
135. *Panjabee,* 26 January 1907.
136. *Modern Review,* February 1907, p. 208.
137. Quoted in *Indian Mirror,* 30 December 1906.

138. *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1906,* pp. ii-iii, 81, 98, 106, 113-14.
139. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 31 December 1906.
140. *Mahratta*, 6 January 1907.
141. *Bande Mataram,* 31 December 1906.
142. Khaparde Diary, 31 December 1906, Khaparde Papers.
143. Tilak to Krishnavarma, 18 January 1907, quoted in Gordon Johnson, *op. cit.,* p. 149.
144. B.R. Nanda, *Gokhale: The Indian Moderates and the British Raj* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 260-1.
145. *Hindu,* 31 December 1906.
146. Mudholkar to Gokhale, 15 October 1906, GP.
147. Mudholkar to Gokhale,? January 1907, *ibid.*
148. Gokhale to Nateshrao (A. Dravid), 9 August 1907, *ibid.*
149. Wacha to Gokhale, 13 December 1906, *ibid.;* C.H. Setalvad to Gokhale, 15 December 1906, *ibid.*
150. Gokhale to Setalvad (telegram), 15 December 1906, *ibid.*
151. Gokhale to Chitnavis, 7 August 1907, Chitnavis Papers. On 20 December 1907, as he was preparing to leave for Surat, Gokhale wrote to Mrs Sarala Ray: 'An open split at the forthcoming Congress seems now inevitable and no one can say what our course in the immediate future is going to be.' Gokhale to Sarala Ray, 20 December 1907, Sarala Ray Papers. See also Gokhale to C. Vijiaraghavachariar, 13 December 1907, Vijiaraghavachariar Papers.
152. Bose to Gokhale, 28 September 1907, GP. See also Wacha to Gokhale, 1 October 1907, *ibid.*
153. V.K. Iyer to Gokhale, 12 December 1907, *ibid.*
154. Wacha to Gokhale, 5 November 1906, *ibid.*
155. See, for example, Wacha to Naoroji, 16 November 1900, NP.
156. Wacha to Gokhale, 5 November 1906, GP.
157. Khaparde Diary, 21 November 1906, Khaparde Papers; R.N. Mudholkar, letter to editor, *Panjabee*, 9 March 1907.
158. Lajpat Rai's letter to editor, *Panjabee,* 12 January 1907; also *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1906,* p. 140. For a slightly different version of how the 1907 Congress came to be invited to Nagpur, see R.N. Mudholkar, letter to editor, *Panjabee,* 9 March 1907.
159. The *Indian People* wrote on 13 October 1907 that at Calcutta in 1906 it was almost arranged that the Congress would be invited to Lahore, but a suspicion got abroad that Extremist views were likely to prevail there. Nagpur was preferred because the 'political pulse of the Central Provinces is feeble and no conflict or disturbance was apprehended'. *Indian People,* 13 October 1907.
160. 'Deccan Letter', *Panjabee,* 26 October 1907.
161. V.R. Pandit to G.M. Chitnavis, 23 February 1907, Chitnavis Papers.
162. M.K. Padhye to R.N. Mudholkar, late April 1907, encl. R.N. Mudholkar to G.K. Gokhale, 3 May 1907.
163. *Ibid.*
164. *Ibid.*
165. *Ibid.*
166. B.S. Moonje to Chitnavis, 22 March 1907, Chitnavis Papers.

167. B.K. Bose to G.M. Chitnavis, 26 March 1907, *ibid.*
168. Gokhale to V.K. Iyer, 28 August 1907, GP; also R.N. Mudholkar to Mehta, 2 October 1907, copy in *ibid.*
169. Chitnavis to Gokhale, 18 July 1907, *ibid.*
170. Gokhale to Chitnavis, 7 August 1967, *ibid.*
171. Khaparde Diary, 10 November 1907, Khaparde Papers.
172. *Kesari,* 3 December 1907; *Panjabee,* 4 December 1907.
173. *Kesari,* 3 December 1907.
174. Writing in the *Swadeshimitran,* 4 January 1908, G.S. Iyer expressed the opinion that 'the fiasco could have been avoided' if the Congress had been arranged 'at any other place than Nagpur or Surat'; it was 'the direct result of the enmity between the Gujarathis and the Mahrattas'. Reproduced in *Indian People,* 12 January 1908.
175. *Mahratta,* 8 December 1907.
176. *Ibid.,* 15 December 1907.
177. *Ibid.,* 22 December 1907.
178. Wedderburn to Gokhale, 5 December 1907, GP.
179. *Ibid.*
180. *India,* 6 December 1907.
181. *Mahratta,* 8 December 1907. See also *Panjabee,* 18 December 1907.
182. Encl. H.A. Wadya to Gokhale, 2 October 1907, GP.
183. A. Nundy to Wacha, 11 October 1907, encl. Wacha to Gokhale, 18 October 1907, *ibid.*
184. On 11 October 1907 Gokhale had written to Wedderburn: 'If a split does come it means a disaster, for the Bureaucracy will then put down both sections without much difficulty.' Encl. Morley to Minto, 31 October 1907, Morley Papers.
185. Lajpat Rai to Gokhale, 3 November 1907, GP.
186. Gokhale to H.N. Apte, 11 September 1907, *ibid.*
187. H.S. Dickshit to Gokhale, 10 September 1907, *ibid.*
188. Reproduced in *India,* 3 January 1908.
189. *Ibid.*
190. Nevinson, *op. cit.,* pp. 233-7.
191. *Ibid.,* pp. 237-62.
192. The phrase is C.Y. Chintamani's. See his letter, dated 9 December 1907, to V.K. Iyer, encl. V.K. Iyer to Gokhale, 12 December 1907, GP.
193. R.N. Mudholkar to Gokhale, 23 November 1907, *ibid.*
194. *Ibid.,* 17 December 1907, *ibid.* See also C.Y. Chintamani to V.K. Iyer, 9 December 1907, encl. V.K. Iyer to Gokhale, 12 December 1907, *ibid.*
195. C.Y. Chintamani to V.K. Iyer, 9 December 1907, encl. V.K. Iyer to Gokhale, 12 December 1907, *ibid.*
196. Gokhale's version, 8 January 1908, *The Surat Congress and Conferences* (Madras, n.d.), p. xxii.
197. *Mahratta,* 9 February 1908.
198. *Indian Social Reformer,* 15 December 1907, and *Panjabee,* 11 December 1907.
199. *Tribune,* 10 January 1908.
200. *Ibid.,* 12 January 1908.
201. *Kesari,* 3 December 1907, RNP, Bombay, 7 December 1907.

202. *Ibid.,* 10 December 1907, *ibid.,* 14 December 1907.
203. *Dnyan Prakash,* 5 December 1907, *ibid.,* 7 December 1907.
204. *Indian People,* 15 December 1907; also 19 December 1907.
205. RNP, Bombay, 21 December 1907.
206. *Ibid.*
207. *Indian Social Reformer,* 22 December 1907.
208. Khaparde Diary, 24 December 1907, Khaparde Papers.
209. M. Nanabhai to Gokhale, 20 December 1907, GP.
210. Nanda, *op. cit.,* p. 285.
211. *Indian Social Reformer,* 24 November 1907.
212. Khaparde Diary, 24 December 1907, Khaparde Papers.
213. *Indu Prakash,* 26 December 1907.
214. Palande (ed.), *op. cit.,* vol. ii, p. 145.
215. *Indian Mirror,* 27 December 1907; *The Surat Congress and Conferences,* p. 29.
216. See above, pp. 54-8.
217. Secretary, Nationalist Conference, to chairman, reception committee, 24 December 1907, GP.
218. *Mahratta,* 2 February 1908.
219. *Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother* (Pondicherry, 1953), p. 82.
220. See *Panjabee,* 21 December 1907.
221. It is not improbable that the hue and cry raised by the Extremists about the alleged designs of the Moderates compelled Gokhale to content himself with mere verbal alterations in the four Calcutta resolutions.
222. Lajpat Rai's letter to editor, *Panjabee,* 15 July 1909; also reproduced in V.C. Joshi (ed.), *Lala Lajpat Rai: Writings and Speeches,* vol. i, p. 180.
223. *Ibid.*
224. H. Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 21-2.
225. *Daily Telegraph,* 27 December 1907, reproduced in *Mahratta,* 12 January 1908.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. 'The Extremists' Version', *The Surat Congress and Conferences* Appendix A, p. iv.
2. *Panjabee,* 15 July 1909.
3. *Times of India,* 30 December 1907.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Quoted in *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 9 January 1908.
6. Note by Dunlop Smith, 15 January 1908, encl. Minto to Morley, 15 January 1908, Morley Papers.
7. *Indian People,* 2 January 1908.
8. *Indian Miror,* 4 January 1908.
9. Minto to Morley, 15 January 1908, Morley Papers.
10. Morley to Minto, 27 December 1907, *ibid.* Interestingly, a year later Morley wrote to Minto: 'A friend of mine who knows both the Russian revolutionists extremely well, and

Lajpat, Tilak, Chandra Pal, pretty well also, declares our Indian friends to be mild Whigs in comparison.' *Ibid.,* 31 December 1908, *ibid.*

11. See obituary notice in *Leader,* 9 January 1912; also V.S. Srinivasa Sastri, *Life and Times of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta* (Madras, 1945), pp. 105-6.
12. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* 'Proceedings of the Convention Held at Surat on the 28th December 1907', p. 17.
13. Palande (ed.), *op. cit.,* vol. ii, pp. 155-6.
14. For the proceedings of this conference, see *ibid,* pp. 156-62. Also *The Surat Congress and Conferences,* Appendix C, pp. xxvii-xxx.
15. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 7 January 1908.
16. *Mahratta,* 23 February 1908.
17. Dutt to Gokahle, 11 March 1908, GP; see also *Gujarati,* 8 March 1908.
18. See *Indian People,* 29 March 1908.
19. *Mahratta,* 1 March 1908.
20. Chintamani to Gokhale, 14 March 1908, GP.
21. 'Appendix to the Extremists' Version', *The Surat Congress and Conferences,* pp. xi-xii.
22. *Ibid.,* p. xii.
23. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* 'Proceedings of the Convention Held at Surat on the 28th December 1907', p. 17.
24. *The Surat Congress and Conferences,* A, p. xii.
25. They also added: 'It is true that the old resolution on Self-Government was subsequently included in the draft Resolutions published only after the commencement of the Congress Session. But the draft Constitution was never withdrawn.' *Ibid.*
26. See, for example, *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 18 January 1908, and *Bande Mataram,* 20 January 1908.
27. Quoted in *Indian Mirror,* 5 February 1908.
28. *Ibid.,* 22 February 1908.
29. *Ibid.,* 23 February 1908.
30. For the proceedings of the Pabna Conference, see *ibid.,* 17-19, 22-7 February 1908.
31. For the full text, see *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 8 April 1908.
32. See *ibid.,* 13 April 1908.
33. *Indian Mirror,* 12 April 1908.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 13 April 1908.
36. *Indian People,* 16 April 1908.
37. Reproduced in *ibid.,* 23 April 1908.
38. *Leader,* 26 October 1911.
39. See above, p. 174.
40. *Mahratta,* 26 April 1908.
41. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 24 April 1908.
42. *Bande Mataram,* 23 April 1908.
43. *Mahratta,* 3 May 1908.
44. *Ibid.,* 17 May 1908.
45. *Ibid.,* 14 June 1908.
46. See *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 26 November 1908.

47. See letter of S.K. Altekar, Kolhapur, to editor, *Mahratta,* 4 October 1909.
48. Gokhale to Vamanrao Patwardhan, 17 July 1908, GP.
49. *Ibid.,* 23 July 1908, *ibid.*
50. *Indu Prakash,* 23 July 1908, RNP, Bombay, 25 July 1908.
51. *Mahratta,* 13 September 1908.
52. See L.B. Bhopatkar, 'Is *Rapprochement* Possible and Desirable?', *Mahratta,* 27 September 1908.
53. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 12 November 1908; also reproduced in *Mahratta,* 22 November 1908.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. Basu to Mehta, 8 November 1908, Mehta Papers.
58. Mehta to Basu, 12 November 1908, reproduced in *Indian People,* 22 November 1908.
59. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 26 November 1908.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Mahratta,* 29 November 1908.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.,* 6 December 1908.
64. *Ibid.,* 27 December 1908; also *Indian People,* 3 January 1909.
65. See Wacha to Gokhale, 25 September 1908, GP.
66. Gokhale to V.K. Iyer, 25 September 1908; Wacha to Gokhale, 9 October 1908, GP.
67. *India,* 27 November 1908.
68. *Indian People,* 7 January 1909.
69. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* p. 34.
70. *Ibid.,* p. 49.
71. *Ibid.,* p. 137.
72. *Ibid.,* Appendix E.
73. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 31 December 1908.
74. Quoted in *Hindu,* 30 December 1908.
75. P.J. Padshah, 'The Indian National Congress, 1908', *East & West,* January 1909, p. 127.
76. *Ibid.*
77. Reproduced in *Indian People,* 26 April 1908.
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Report of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1908,* p. 142.
80. Ram Bhuj Datta Chaudhari in *Panjabee,* 2 October 1909.
81. *Ibid.;* also *Indian People,* 10 June 1909.
82. *Indian World,* July-August 1909, pp. 125-6.
83. Gokhale to Wedderburn, 24 September 1909, GP.
84. For some conjectures, see Home Pol. B, January 1910, nos.100-1, NAI; V.S. S.Sastri, *Life and Times of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta,* p. 128; H.P. Mody, *Sir Pherozeshah Mehta: A Political Biography* (Bombay, 1921), vol. ii, pp. 554-5.
85. *Report of the Twenty-Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1909,* Appendix C, pp. xv-xxv.
86. *Ibid.*

87. For some indication of the troubles faced by the reception committee, see *Tribune,* 9-11 December 1909.
88. *Report of the Twenty-Fourth Indian National Congress ..., 1909,* p. 15.
89. Gokhale to Wedderburn, 30 June 1910, GP.
90. *Ibid.*
91. Nanda, *op. cit.,* p. 367.
92. *India,* 25 November 1910.
93. See Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, G.P.
94. *Mahratta,* 25 December 1910.
95. *Leader,* 4 December 1910.
96. *Hindu,* 10 August 1910.
97. For example, *Mahratta,* 21 August 1910.
98. For example, *Leader,* 4 December 1910; *Indu Prakash,* 13 December 1910, *Bombay Samachar,* 14 December 1910, *Sudharak,* 26 December 1910, quoted in RNP, Bombay, 17, 24, 31 December 1910; *Gujarati,* 1 January 1911.
99. *Report of the Twenty-Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1910,* pp. 28-9.
100. Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, GP.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *Report of the Twenty-Fifth Indian National Congress ..., 1910,* p. 103.
103. See, for example, R.N. Mudholkar to Gokhale, 5 September 1907, and *Leader,* 15 November 1915.
104. Chintamani to Gokhale, 1 November 1911, GP; also p. 70 above.
105. See Wacha to Gokhale, 27 April 1911, and D.A. Khare to Gokhale, 17 July 1912, GP.
106. Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, *ibid.*
107. *Gujarati,* 15 October 1911.
108. *Leader,* 4 December 1910.
109. *Ibid.,* 26 October 1911.
110. *Bengalee,* 24 October 1911; *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 23 December 1911.
111. Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, GP. See also *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 30 December 1911; *Mahratta,* 7 January 1912.
112. *Leader,* 5 January 1912.
113. *Ibid.,* 28 March 1912. See also *Indu Prakash,* quoted in *Tribune,* 13 February 1912; *Tribune,* 14 February, 21 March 1912.
114. *Leader,* 11 May 1912.
115. The phrase is the *Leader*'s. See *ibid.,* 5 October 1912.
116. Quoted in *ibid.,* 1 October 1912.
117. Quoted in *ibid.,* 5 October 1912.
118. Quoted in *ibid.,* 1 October 1912.
119. *Ibid.,* 22 December 1912.
120. *Indu Prakash,* quoted in *Hindu,* 3 January 1913.
121. *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Indian National Congress ..., 1912,* p. 119. The president, who moved the resolution, remarked at the Congress: 'There has been a complaint during the last two or three years that in trying to protect the Congress from occurrences which very nearly brought us to a grave disaster in 1907, it was necessary to impose certain restrictions. In imposing these restrictions it was laid down that only certain associations

should have the right to elect delegates. Since last year, however, there has been a suggestion that the door should be opened and that public meetings convened under sufficient guarantees of their being faithful acceptors of the creed of the Congress, should be allowed to elect delegates. The suggestion is made by the Subjects Committee and by the All-India Congress Committee, that meetings called by the Congress Committees and by associations recognised by the Congress Committees may elect delegates to the Congress.' *Ibid.*

122. *Hindu,* 2 January 1913.
123. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 30 December 1912; also quoted in *Mahratta,* 12 January 1913.
124. H. Vishindas, 'The Congress and Conferences at Karachi', *Modern Review,* February 1914, p. 225.
125. Circular about the proposed provincial conference, 6 March 1914, in Deccan Sabha records, Poona, quoted in Gordon Johnson, *op. cit.,* p. 185; also *Mahratta,* 26 April 1914, and *Gujarati,* 26 April 1914.
126. *Mahratta,* 3 may 1914.
127. *Gujarati,* 3, 10, 17 May 1914.
128. *Leader,* 30 April 1914.
129. *Ibid.,* 20 May 1914.
130. 'An Indian', 'Political Life in India', *Times of India,* 24 April 1914, reproduced in *Leader,* 3 May 1914.
131. *Leader,* 16 October 1914.
132. *New India,* 18 October 1914; also reproduced in *Leader,* 18 October 1914. See also Besant to B.N. Basu, 28 September 1914, Basu Papers.
133. *New India,* 18 October 1914. For the contributions made by leading Indian politicians, see *ibid.,* 28 October, 5, 10, 15, 25 November, 2, 4, 6, 9, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 25, 27 December 1914, 2, 13 January 1915.
134. *Ibid.,* 10 November 1914.
135. *Ibid.,* 6 December 1914.
136. *Ibid.,* 11 December 1914.
137. *Ibid.,* 3 December 1914.
138. *Ibid.,* 17 December 1914; *Leader,* 17 December 1914.
139. Motilal Ghose to Gokhale, 15 November 1914, GP.
140. 'It is so seldom that one meets a man in public life for whom one can feel the whole-hearted respect which one feels for Mr. Gokhale, whose one love is India, whose one ambition is service, and who gives himself with the enthusiasm of a youth and the wisdom of a grey-beard to the Motherland.' Besant, in *Theosophist,* writing about her recent meeting with Gokhale in England, quoted in *Madras Standard,* 30 July 1914.
141. ' ... we look to the Hon. Mr. G.K. Gokhale as our leader, regarding him as unsurpassed in purest patriotism, in utter self-sacrifice, in perfect devotion to his country's good, while, at the same time, he shows the political insight, the self-control in political life, the wisdom in tactics, the instinct of leadership, the solidity of information, which are at present—owing to circumstances only—unusual in the Hindu within the British Raj.' *New India,* 5 August 1914.
142. Besant to Gokhale, 15 November 1914, GP. Gokhale, whom Mrs Besant had met in Poona in early February 1914 and, again, in England in the following summer, had already assured

her of his desire to promote Congress reunion at the Madras session in December 1914. See Besant to Gokhale, 6 February, 28 May, 22 June, 16 July, 24 November 1914, GP, and Gokhale to Besant, 25 June 1914, Besant Papers.

143. Basu to Gokhale, 21 November 1914, GP.
144. Gokhale to Besant, 10 January 1915, *ibid.;* also Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, *ibid.*
145. Tilak to Khaparde, 22 November 1914, Khaparde papers.
146. Besant to Gokhale, 19 November 1914, GP.
147. Gokhale to Besant, 21 November 1914, *ibid.*
148. Besant to Gokhale, 24 November 1914; see also Besant to Gokhale, 23 November 1914, *ibid.*
149. Gokhale to B.N. Basu, [25] November 1914 (telegram), *ibid.* Basu had requested a telegraphic reply to his letter of 21 November 1914, because he had arranged a meeting on the subject on 25 November 1914 in Calcutta. See Basu to Gokhale, 21 November 1914, *ibid.*
150. B.N. Basu to Gokhale, 26 November 1914, *ibid.*
151. Gokhale to Besant, 10 January 1915, *ibid.*
152. *Ibid.*
153. *Ibid.*
154. *Ibid.*
155. Though Gokhale's letter to Sastri is not available, Sastri's communications to Gokhale, dated 2, 3 December 1914 (see note 156 below), leave no doubt that he was acting under instructions from the latter.
156. Sastri to Gokhale, 2, 3 December 1914 (telegrams); also letter of 3 December 1914, *ibid.* See also Besant to Gokhale, 2 December 1914, *ibid.* It is astonishing that these important communications should have escaped the notice of almost all historians who have so far dealt with the subject.
157. Soon after his return to India in mid-November 1914 Gokhale would have come to know that, though high British officials like Willingdon were now favourably inclined towards Indian political aspirations, their antipathy to Extremists like Tilak had not abated.
158. Tilak to Khaparde, 21 November 1914, Khaparde Papers.
159. Tilak to Khaparde, 7 December 1914, *ibid.,* Tilak must have written to Motilal Ghose in a similar vein on 7 or 8 December 1914, for we find B.N. Basu in a letter to Gokahle, dated 10 December 1914, saying this: 'Babu Motilal [Ghose] showed me a letter which Mr. Tilak has written to him, from which it appears that all hope of reconciliation this year is gone. What has become of your idea of throwing open election to public meetings? Is it repudiated in Bombay? The Bengal seceders were willing to go as visitors and then after a resolution was passed amending the Constitution, in this respect, join as delegates. Can this be managed?' Basu to Gokhale, 10 December 1914, GP.
160. 'Mr. Tilak's Statement', 12 February 1915, *Mahratta,* 14 February 1915.
161. *Ibid.*
162. *Ibid.,* 7 February 1915.
163. *Ibid.,* 14 February 1915.
164. Gokhale to Basu, 14 December 1914, GP.
165. *Ibid.,* 25 December 1914, *ibid.*

166. 'It was really a very fortunate thing that Mr. Subba Rao had the statement he prepared corrected and modified by Tilak himself and this first-hand proof of Tilak's views, inward as they are, has stood us in good stead.' G.K. Devadhar (from Madras) to Gokhale, 26 December 1914, *ibid.*
167. Basu to Gokhale, 21 November 1914, *ibid.; Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 27 November 1914; *Mahratta,* 13 December 1914.
168. Basu to Gokhale, 10 December 1914, GP.
169. Besant to Gokhale, 14 December, 1914, *ibid.*
170. Basu to Gokhale, 21 December 1914, *ibid.*
171. *Hindu,* 27 December 1914.
172. *Ibid.*
173. *Ibid.,* 28 December 1914.
174. Besant, 'The Story of a Failure', *New India,* 1 February 1915.
175. Besant's private conversation with L. Govindaraghava Iyer and V.S. S. Sastri, reported in Sastri to H.S. Deva, 23 December 1914, GP.
176. 'A Spectator', 'The Madras Congress and Conferences III', *Mahratta,* 24 January 1915.
177. See Sastri to Gokhale, 30, 31 December 1914; Subba Rao to Gokhale, 28, 30 December 1914, 1 January 1915, GP.
178. Sastri to Gokhale, 30 December 1914; see also Devadhar and Dalvi to Gokhale (telegram), 26 December 1914, H.S. Deva for Mehta to Dalvi (n.d. but probably 27 December 1914, telegram), *ibid.,* and Devadhar to Gokhale, 30 December 1914, G.K. Devadhar Papers.
179. *Tribune,* 6, 9 January 1914.
180. *Leader,* 8 January 1915. In another article published on the same theme in *New India,* 2 January 1915, Besant had written: 'It was clear that, in the minds of that vast audience, Bombay was hostile to the closing of the rift ... and ... not likely to finish what Madras had begun, but rather revive old antagonism. ... The tendency seems to be—among those who desire to lock the door and keep others out—to make the controversy rage round one particular man. But there are hundreds, probably thousands, who desire to come into the Congress, who do not belong to any one class of opinions as a whole, but who are held by a tradition to the old way of electing delegates at public meetings. They feel strongly that they have been deprived of a right.' *New India,* 2 January 1915. See also *Report of the Twenty-Ninth Indian National Congress..., 1914,* p. 133.
181. *Hindu,* 6 January 1915.
182. *Ibid.,* 16 January 1915.
183. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 5 January 1915.
184. *Mahratta,* 3 January 1915.
185. *Leader,* 12 November 1915.
186. *Indian Social Reformer,* 13 November 1915.
187. *Leader,* 29 April 1914.
188. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 12 November 1915.
189. *Mahratta,* 28 November 1915.
190. See above, p. 187.
191. Tilak, *A Step in the Steamer,* p. 36. See also Tilak to B.S. Munje, 8 January 1916, in Vidwans (ed.), *op. cit.,* p. 276.

192. *Leader,* 11 December 1914. For Mrs Besant's famous description of the old as 'yesterdays' and the young as 'tomorrows', see *New India,* 4 November 1915.
193. *Hindu,* 8 February 1915.
194. *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 12 November 1915.
195. *Leader,* 20 February 1916.
196. 'Vanavasi Arjun' in *Indu Prakash,* quoted in *New India,* 19 December 1916.
197. *Leader,* 6 January 1918.
198. Home Pol. A, July 1917, nos. 299-313 & K. -W., NAI.
199. *Ibid.*
200. Gandhi to J.L. Maffey, 7 July 1917, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi, 1964), vol. xiii, p. 464.
201. Home Pol. B, September 1917, nos. 239-43; also *ibid.,* November 1917, no. 6, NAI; J.L. Banerjee, *Recent Congress Incidents in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1917); P. Dutt, *Memoirs of Moti Lal Ghose* (Calcutta, 1935), pp. 262-3; *Amrita Bazar Patrika,* 30, 31 August, 1 September 1917; *Bengalee,* 30, 31 August 1917; *Leader,* 2, 4, 5, 6 September 1917.
202. Copy in Deccan Sabha records. See also Ray's 'An Open Letter to My Countrymen', in *Leader,* 21 February 1918. Already, on 30 March 1917, some prominent Moderates had formed an Indian Liberal Club in Bombay. See *Indian Social Reformer,* 8 April 1917, *Mahratta,* 8 April 1917, and *Tribune,* 11 April 1917.
203. Home Pol. B, December 1917, no. 227, NAI.
204. *Ibid.;* also Home Pol. B, January 1918, no. 488, NAI, and Wacha to Vijiaraghavachariar, 8, 9 August 1917, Vijiaraghavachariar Papers.
205. Home Pol. B, January 1918, no. 488, NAI; also 'Calcutta Congress IV: Some Observations by a Visitor', *Leader,* 11 February 1918.
206. Home Pol. B, January 1918, no. 488, NAI.
207. *Ibid.*
208. Home Pol. B, February 1918, no. 214, NAI.
209. *Ibid.* Banerjea joined the League only after it was clear to him that he had lost control of the Congress in Bengal and after S.P. Sinha had 'screw[ed] him on the right side'. See Chintamani to Sastri, 24, 28 May, 5 June 1918, and S.N. Bose to Sastri, 4 December 1918, Sastri Papers.
210. *Englishman,* 13 June 1918.
211. *Ibid.*
212. See C.R. Das, *India for Indians* (Madras, 1921), pp. 125-6. There is ample evidence available on this point in the private papers of V.S. Srinivasa Sastri. See also Basu to Sastri, 31 May 1918, and S. Nair to Sastri, 26 June 1918 (enclosing Basu's telegrams of 17, 22 June 1918) in Servants of India Society records.
213. *Servant of India,* 19 February 1918; also *Indian Review,* February 1918, p. 155. In the manifesto of the Deccan Sabha, 1896, which he is alleged to have drafted, Ranade had said: 'Liberalism and Moderation will be the watchwords of this Association. The spirit of Liberalism implies a freedom from race and creed prejudices and a steady devotion to all that seeks to do justice between man and man, giving to the rulers the loyalty that is due to the law they are bound to administer, but securing at the same time to the ruled the equality which is their right under the law. Moderation imposes the condition of never vainly aspiring after the impossible or after too remote ideals, but striving each day to take the

next step in the order of natural growth by doing the work that lies nearest to our hands in a spirit of compromise and fairness.' See Palande (ed.), *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 848-9.

214. E.S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary* (London, 1930), pp. 163, 236, 274.
215. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
216. See C.P. Ramaswami Aiyer, 'Montagu: A Personal Tribute', *Indian Review*, January 1925, pp. 73-6. Tej Bahadur Sapru later remarked that 'the existence in India of a party prepared to work the reforms honestly and zealously was due to the influence of Mr. Montagu'. See telegram from viceroy to secretary of state, 28 March 1922, Montagu Papers.
217. Montagu, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
218. *Ibid.*, p. 248.
219. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
220. *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 104, 133-4, 217, 236, 363. The evidence of the *Diary* can now be easily supplemented with that available in the papers of Montagu and Chelmsford.
221. See, for example, *Hindu*, 22, 29 June, 9 July 1918, and Sastri to Vamana Rao, 31 May 1918, Sastri Papers.
222. *Congress Memorandum Submitted to the S.O.S. and the Viceroy at Delhi in November 1917* (Adyar, 1918).
223. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
224. *Ibid.*
225. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
226. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
227. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
228. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
229. *Ibid.*
230. *Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1917, passim.*
231. *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (1918), Cd. 9109.
232. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
233. For Indian reactions to the Montagu-Chelmsford report, see S. Satyamurti (ed.), *The Montagu-Chelmsford Reform Proposals* (Madras, 1918).
234. The report had many purple patches such as the following: 'In estimating the politically-minded portion of the people of India we should not go either to census reports, on the one hand, or to political literature, on the other. It is one of the most difficult portions of our task to see them in their right relation to the rest of the country. Our obligations to them are plain, for they are intellectually our children. They have imbibed ideas which we ourselves have set before them, and we ought to reckon it to their credit. The present intellectual and moral stir in India is no reproach but rather a tribute to our work. The *Raj* would have been a mechanical and iron thing if the spirit of India had not responded to it. We must remember, too, that the educated Indian has come to the front by hard work; he has seized the education which we offered him because he first saw its advantages; and it is he who has advocated and worked for political progress. All this stands to his credit. For thirty years he has developed in his Congress and latterly in the Muslim League, free popular convocations which express his ideals. We owe him sympathy because he has conceived and pursued the idea of managing his own affairs, an aim which we have given him in the legislative councils of influencing Government and affecting the course of public business, and of recent years he has by speeches and in press done much to spread the idea of a

united and self-respecting India among thousands who had no such conception in their minds.' Cd. 9109, p. 115. And, again: 'We believe that the announcement of August 20 was right and wise; and that the policy which it embodies is the only possible policy for India. We have seen it estimated that the number of people who really ask for free institutions does not exceed five per cent of the population. It is in any case a small proportion; but to the particular numeral we attach no importance whatever. We are not setting about to stir 95 per cent of the people out of their peaceful conservatism and setting their feet upon a new and difficult path merely at the bidding of the other five per cent; nor would that be our reason, whether the articulate minority were 20 per cent or one-half per cent of the whole. Our reason is the faith that is in us. We have shown how step by step British policy in India has been steadily directed to a point at which the question of a self-governing India was bound to arise; how impulses, at first faint, have been encouraged by education and opportunity; how the growth quickened nine years ago, and was immeasurably accelerated by the war. We measure it not by the crowds at political meetings or the multiplication of newspapers; but by the infallible signs that indicate the growth of character. We believe profoundly that the time has now come when the sheltered existence which we have given India cannot be prolonged without damage to her national life; that we have a richer gift for her people than any that we have yet bestowed on them; that nationhood within the Empire represents something better than anything India has hitherto attained; that the placid, pathetic contentment of the masses is not the soil on which such Indian nationhood will grow, and that in deliberately disturbing it, we are working for her highest good.' *Ibid.*, pp. 119-20.

235. Chintamani to Sastri, 28 May 1918, Sastri Papers.
236. The phrase is Montagu's. See Montagu to Chelmsford, 28 November 1918, Chelmsford Papers.
237. Sastri to S.G. Vaze, 3 February 1918, Sastri Papers.
238. Home Pol. B, August 1918, nos. 208-13, NAI.
239. Sastri to Vaze, 21 August 1918, Sastri Papers.
240. *Report of the Special Session of the Indian National Congress Held at Bombay on 29th, 30th, 31st August and 1st September, 1918,* 'Foreword'. Though the AICC took the decision at its meeting held in Delhi on 23 Ferbruary 1918, the suggestion was originally made by Jinnah at the Calcutta Congress. See *Report of the Thirty-Second Indian National Congress ..., 1917,* pp. 97, 137.
241. *Report of the Special Session of the Indian National Congress ..., 1918,* p. 1.
242. *Ibid.*, Appendix, p. i.
243. Some of these were (i) the introduction of dyarchy at the centre; (ii) no Council of State at the centre or a Council of State with at least half its members being elective; (iii) at least half the members of the viceroy's executive council to be Indians; (iv) at least half the members of the executive councils of the governors to be Indians; (v) only law, police and justice to be reserved subjects in the provinces for a period of no more than six years; (vi) no 'Grand Committee' in the provinces; and (vii) four-fifths of the members of the provincial legislatures to be elective. *Ibid.*, pp. i-ii.
244. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
245. *Ibid.*, p. i.
246. *Ibid.*, p. ii.

247. *Ibid.*, pp. i-vi.
248. B.N. Basu wrote to Sastri on 1 August 1918: 'I am now thoroughly convinced that in re-opening the Congress to those who had broken it up at Surat we made a mistake. ... The Moderate party in India must have a new organisation ... .' Basu to Sastri, 1 August 1918, Sastri Papers. Wacha wrote to C. Vijiaraghavachariar on 8 August 1917: 'There must be a parting of the ways. This is the result of a "united Congress"—so much disintegration and disruption....' Wacha to Vijiaraghavachariar, 8 August 1918, Vijiaraghachariar Papers. See also N.P. Asthana, 'The Moderate Conference', in *Leader,* 10 October 1918.
249. See B.L. Mitter, *Extremists and Moderates: a Study* (Calcutta, 1918); also Sir B.C. Mitter, 'A Separate Conference', in *Bengalee,* reproduced in *Leader,* 18 August 1918; D.E. Wacha in *Indian Social Reformer,* 11 August 1918; *Leader,* 4 September 1918; N.M. Samarth, 'Congress Resolution: Appeal to Thoughtful Indians', *Leader,* 8 September 1918; 'Our Immediate Duty', *Leader,* 15 August 1918; *Bengalee,* 18 August 1918.
250. See, for example, *Bengalee,* 18 August 1918, and Sastri's remark in *Leader,* 2 September 1918.
251. For Malaviya's appeal, see *Leader* 24 August 1918; also his letter, dated 8 August 1918, to S.N. Banerjea, copy in records of Servants of India Society, Madras, and Banerjea's telegram to Mrs Besant, 26 August 1918, in AICC Files, 1918, no. 2.
252. See, for example, Chelmsford to Montagu, 13 July, 17 September, 10 October, 26 December 1918; Montagu to Chelmsford, 1 January, 11 June, 24 July, 1 August 1918; Willingdon to Chelmsford, 9 May, 11 June, 27 July 1918; Butler to Chelmsford, 27, 31 July 1918; Chelmsford to Butler, 1 August 1918, Chelmsford Papers; also Willingdon to Montagu, 11, 30 July, 24 August, 5, 17 September, 9 November, 24 December 1918; Montagu to Willingdon, 13 August 1918; Montagu to Ronaldshay, 13 August, 25 September, 24 October, 29 November 1918, Montagu Papers.
253. *Indian Social Reformer,* 11 August 1918.
254. *Report of the Special Session of the Indian National Congress ..., 1918,* p. 101.
255. *Proceedings of the Indian Legislative Council,* 1918-19, vol. lvii, p. 93.
256. Chelmsford to Montagu, 31 August and 17 September 1918, Chelmsford Papers.
257. Willingdon to Montagu, 5 September 1918, Montagu Papers.
258. Reproduced in *Leader,* 28 August 1918.
259. Reproduced in *Hindu,* 28 October 1918.
260. *Times of India,* 2 November 1918; *Report of the Proceedings of the First Session of the All-India Conference of the Moderate Party Held at Bombay in the Empire Theatre on the Ist and 2nd November 1918* (Bombay, 1919), pp. 1-5.
261. *Times of India,* 4 November 1918; *Report of the Proceedings of the First Session of the All-India Conference of the Moderate Party ..., 1918,* pp. 28-57.
262. Montagu to Chelmsford, 28 November 1918, Chelmsford Papers.
263. Montagu, *An Indian Diary,* p. 236.
264. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-7.
265. *Ibid.*
266. Cd. 9109, p. 211.
267. Montagu to Chelmsford, 19 December 1917, 15 March 1918, Montagu Papers.
268. *Ibid.*, 28 November 1918, Chelmsford Papers.
269. Montagu to Ronaldshay, 4 March 1919, Montagu Papers.

270. Meston to Chelmsford, 19 December 1918, Chelmsford Papers.
271. S.N. Banerjea wrote to C. Vijiaraghavachariar on 11 May 1918: 'Public opinion is far more potent today than it was even a year ago ... .' Vijiaraghavachariar Papers. See also *Report of the Thirty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1918,* pp. 29, 88.
272. *Report of the Thirty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1918,* Appendix A, pp. vi-vii.
273. *Leader,* 16 December 1918.
274. *Report of the Thirty-Third Indian National Congress ..., 1918,* pp. 77, 80.
275. *Ibid.,* pp. 33, 81. The Rowlatt report, Cd. 9190 (1918), was the work of a committee, headed by Sir Sidney Rowlatt of the King's Bench in England, which inquired into seditious activities in India. Based upon its recommendations, the so-called Rowlatt Act, 1919, authorized the government of India to retain the summary powers vested in them during the war.
276. *Letter from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated March 5, 1919, and Enclosures, on the Questions Raised in the Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms,* Cmd. 123 (1919), p. 1.
277. *The Times,* 19 August 1918.

Biographical Notes

AIYAR, C.P. RAMASWAMI (1879-1966). Lawyer; joint general secretary of Indian National Congress 1918; member of Madras governor's council 1923-8 and of viceroy's council 1931-2, 1942; *diwan* of Travancore 1936-47.

AJUDHIANATH (1840-92). Lawyer; member of legislative council, North-Western Provinces 1886-90; joint general secretary of Indian National Congress 1889-92.

ALI, SYED AMIR (1849-1928). Barrister; member of Bengal legislative council 1878-83 and of governor-general's council 1883-5; secretary of National Mahomedan Association 1878-90; judge of Calcutta high court 1890-1904.

AMPTHILL, SECOND BARON (ARTHUR OLIVER VILLIERS) (1869-1935). Governor of Madras 1900-6; acting viceroy 1904; wrote 'Introduction' to *M.K. Gandhi: An Indian Patriot in South Africa* (London, 1909) by Joseph J. Doke.

ANSARI, M.A. (1880-1936). Medical practitioner at Delhi; president of All-India Muslim League 1920, of Indian National Congress 1927, and of All-Parties Conference 1928.

ARUNDALE, G.S. (1878-1945). A prominent Theosophist; teacher and author; married Rukmini Devi.

ASQUITH, HERBERT HENRY, FIRST EARL OF OXFORD AND ASQUITH (1852-1928). Liberal statesman; home secretary 1892-5; chancellor of exchequer 1905-8; prime minister of Britain 1908-16; created earl 1925.

ATHERLEY-JONES, L.A. (1951-1929). Barrister; M.P. 1885-1914.

BAIJNATH, LALA (1853-1914). In N.W.P. judicial service; later chief justice in Indore state.

BALFOUR, ARTHUR JAMES, FIRST EARL (1848-1930). Chief secretary for Ireland 1887-91; first lord of treasury 1891-2, 1895-1902; prime minister of Britain 1902-5; first lord of admiralty 1915-16; foreign secretary 1916-19; lord president of council 1919-22; created earl 1922.

BANERJEA, SURENDRANATH (1848-1925). Entered Indian civil service 1871; dismissed from Indian civil service 1874; teacher and journalist at Calcutta; president of Indian National Congress 1895, 1902; minister in Bengal government 1921-3.

BANERJI, K.C. (1847-1907). Teacher, later lawyer and journalist; first Indian registrar of Calcutta university 1903.

BANON, A.T. (?-1924). Settled as orchardist in Kullu-Manali region after retiring as captain from Indian army in the 1860s.

BAPTISTA, JOSEPH (1864-1930). Lawyer at Bombay.

BARING, E. (1841-1917). Private secretary to Lord Northbrook, viceroy of India 1872-6; finance member of viceroy's council 1880-3; British agent and consul-general in Egypt 1883-1907; created Baron Cromer 1892.

BARODA, SAYAJI RAO, MAHARAJA GAIKWAR OF (1863-1939). Chosen to replace unsatisfactory ruling prince 1875; invested with ruling power 1881.

BASU, BHUPENDRANATH (1859-1924). Lawyer at Calcutta; president of Indian National Congress 1914; member of secretary of state's council 1917-23, and of Bengal governor's council 1924.

BAXTER, W.E. (1825-90). Businessman; advocate of disestablishment; M.P. 1855-85; secretary to admiralty 1868-71; joint secretary to treasury 1871-3.

BECK, THEODORE (1859-99). Principal of Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh 1883-98.

BENGALEE, S.S. (1831-93). Parsi businessman; sheriff of Bombay 1881.

BESANT, ANNIE (1847-1933). Theosophist, educationist, politician; came to India 1893; president of Theosophical Society 1907-33; president of Indian National Congress 1917.

BHANDARKAR, R.G. (1837-1925). Educationist, orientalist and social reformer; in Bombay education service.

BHURGRI, G.M. (1878-1924). Sindhi landowner and lawyer; joint general secretary of Indian National Congress 1918.

BIKANER, MAHARAJA OF, GANGA SINGH BAHADUR (1880-1943). Succeeded 1887; assumed ruling powers 1898; chancellor of chamber of princes 1921-6.

BISHAMBHARNATH (1832-1908). Lawyer; chairman of Congress reception committee 1892.

BLAKE, EDWARD (1833-1912). Canadian lawyer and politician; prime minister of Ontario 1871-2; nationalist member for South Longford, Ireland 1892-1907.

BLAVATSKY, HELENA P. (1831-91). Born in Russia; became American citizen 1873; founded, with Colonel Olcott, Theosophical Society at New York 1875; arrived India 1879; left India 1885.

BONNERJEE, W.C. (1844-1906). Barrister; president of Indian National Congress 1885, 1892; member of Bengal legislative council 1893.

BOSE, A.M. (1847-1906). Lawyer, educationist and social reformer; president of Indian National Congress 1898.

BRADLAUGH, CHARLES (1833-91). Freethinker; radical British politician; attended 1889 Congress at Bombay.

BRIGHT, JOHN (1811-89). Liberal British statesman.

BROCKWAY, A. FENNER (1888-1988). Labour politician; M.P. 1950-64; created life peer 1964.

BRYCE, JAMES (1838-1922). Jurist, historian and statesman; chief secretary for Ireland 1905-6; created viscount 1914.

BUTLER, SPENCER HARCOURT (1869-1938). Entered Indian civil service 1890; lieutenant-governor of Burma 1915-18 and of United Provinces 1918-21; governor of United Provinces 1921-3; chairman of Indian states committee 1927-9.

BUTT, ISAAC (1813-79). Irish politician; founded Home Rule Association 1870.

CAINE, W.S. (1842-1903). British politician and temperance reformer; M.P. 1880-90, 1892-5.

CAIRD, JAMES (1816-92). Authority on agricultural subjects; visited India as member of Indian famine commission 1878-9; M.P. 1857-65.

CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, HENRY (1836-1908). Liberal M.P. 1868-1908; prime minister of Britain 1905-8.

CARMICHAEL, BARON, OF SKIRLING (1859-1926). Governor of Victoria 1908-11; governor of Madras 1911-12 and of Bengal 1912-17.

CARSON, EDWARD (1854-1935). Lawyer; leader of Protestants in northern Ireland.

CHAMBERLAIN, AUSTEN (1863-1937). Liberal Unionist M.P. 1892-1937; chancellor of exchequer 1903-5 and 1919-21; secretary of state for India 1915-17; member of war cabinet 1918; foreign secretary 1924-9; first lord of admiralty 1931.

CHAMBERLAIN, JOSEPH (1836-1914). Statesman and social reformer; president of board of trade 1880-5; president of local government board 1886; resigned on introduction of Irish Home Rule Bill 1886; colonial secretary 1895-1903.

CHANDAVRAKAR, N.G. (1855-1923). Journalist and lawyer; president of Indian National Congress 1900; judge of Bombay high court 1901-13.

CHARLU, P. ANANDA (1843-1908). Lawyer at Madras; president of Indian National Congress 1891.

CHELMSFORD, FIRST VISCOUNT, F.J.N. THESIGER (1868-1933). Governor of Queensland 1905-9 and of New South Wales 1909-13; governor-general of India 1916-21; first lord of admiralty 1924.

CHINTAMANI, C.Y. (1880-1941). Journalist and politician; editor of *Leader;* member of United Provinces legislative council 1916-23, 1927-36; minister in U.P. government 1921-3; president of National Liberal Federation of India 1920, 1931.

CHIPLONKAR, S.H. (1851-94). Lawyer and journalist at Poona.

CHIROL, VALENTINE (1852-1929). Traveller, journalist and author; in charge of *The Times* foreign department 1896-1912; visited India seventeen times; member of commission on Indian public services 1912-14.

CHITNAVIS, G.M. (1863-1929). Landlord and businessman at Nagpur; member of imperial legislative council 1893-5, 1898-9, 1907-16.

CHURCHILL, RANDOLPH HENRY SPENCER (1849-94). Tory politician; secretary of state for India 1885-6.

CLARK, G.B. (1846-1930). Physician and politician; visited India 1867; M.P. 1885-1900.

COBDEN, RICHARD (1804-65). British statesman.

COLVIN, AUCKLAND (1838-1908). Entered Indian civil service 1858; comptroller-general in Egypt 1880-2; financial adviser to the Khedive 1882-3; finance member of governor-general's council 1883-7; lieutenant-governor of North-Western Provinces 1887-92.

CONNEMARA, ROBERT BOURKE, FIRST BARON (1827-1902). Governor of Madras 1886-90.

COTTON, HENRY JOHN STEDMAN (1845-1915). Entered Indian civil service 1867; chief commissioner of Assam 1896-1902; president of Indian National Congress 1904; Liberal M.P. 1906-10.

CRADDOCK, REGINALD (1868-1937). Entered Indian civil service 1884; chief commissioner of Central Provinces 1907-12; home member of viceroy's council 1912-17; lieutenant-governor of Burma 1917-22; M.P. 1931-7.

CREWE, MARQUESS OF, R.O.A. CREWE-MILNES (1858-1945). Viceroy of Ireland 1892-5; lord president of council 1905-8, 1915-16; lord privy seal 1908-11, 1912-15; colonial secretary 1908-10; secretary of state for India 1910-15; president of board of education 1916; ambassador at Paris 1922-8; secretary of state for war 1931.

CROSS, RICHARD ASSHETON, FIRST VISCOUNT (1823-1914). Conservative politician; home secretary 1885-6; secretary of state for India 1886-92; lord privy seal 1895-1900.

CURZON, GEORGE NATHANIEL, MARQUESS CURZON OF KEDLESTON (1859-1925). Under-secretary for India 1891-2; governor-general of India 1898-1905; lord president of council and member of war cabinet 1916-18; foreign secretary 1919-24.

DAR, B.N. (1864-1916). Lawyer; president of Indian National Congress 1911.

DARBHANGA, MAHARAJA OF, LACHHMESWAR PRASAD SINGH (1856-98). Premier landlord of Bihar; largest single contributor to Congress funds.

DAS, C.R. (1870-1925). Barrister at Calcutta; president of Indian National Congress 1921; formed, with Motilal Nehru, Swaraj Party 1923.

DAVITT, M. (1846-1906). Irish politician.

DAYANAND, SWAMI (1825-83). Religious and social reformer.

DESAI, I.S. (1857-1912). Journalist; editor of *Gujarati.*

DHARAMSI, A.M. (?-1897). Khoja; solicitor at Bombay.

DIGBY, WILLIAM (1849-1904). Journalist and politician.

DILLON. JOHN (1851-1927). Irish nationalist leader.

DUFFERIN, FIRST MARQUIS OF (FREDERICK TEMPLE HAMILTON-TEMPLE BLACKWOOD) (1826-1902). Under-secretary for India 1864-6; governor-general of Canada 1872-8; ambassador at St Petersburg 1879-81 and at Constantinople 1881-2; special commissioner to Egypt 1882-3; governor-general of India 1884-8; ambassador at Rome 1889-91 and at Paris 1891-6.

DUTT, A.K. (1856-1923). Teacher, later lawyer, at Barisal.

DUTT, R.C. (1848-1909). Entered Indian civil service 1871; president of Indian National Congress 1899; in Baroda state service 1904-9.

ELGIN, NINTH EARL OF (VICTOR ALEXANDER BRUCE) (1849-1917). Governor-general of India 1894-8; colonial secretary 1905-8.

ELLIS, JOHN (1841-1910). Liberal M.P. 1885-1910; under secretary of state for India 1905-6.

FRASER, LOVAT (1871-1926). Journalist; editor of the Bombay *Times of India* for several years; on editorial staff of *The Times* 1907-22.

GANDHI, MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND (1869-1948). Called to the bar 1889; went to South Africa 1893; returned to India 1915; leading figure of Indian National Congress till his assassination in 1948.

GHOSAL, J.N. (1840-1913). Landlord and journalist.

GHOSE, AUROBINDO (1872-1950). Passed written examination for Indian civil service but did not take the riding test 1890; teacher at Baroda 1893-1906; leader of Bengali Extremists 1906-10; retired to Pondicherry in 1910 and devoted himself to spiritualism.

GHOSE, L.M. (1849-1909). Barrister; president of Indian National Congress 1903.

GHOSE, M.M. (1844-96). Barrister of Calcutta high court.

GHOSE, MOTILAL (1847-1922). Journalist; editor of *Amrita Bazar Patrika.*

GHOSE, RASH BEHARI (1845-1921). Lawyer, jurist and scholar; president of Indian National Congress 1907 and 1908.

GLADSTONE, HERBERT JOHN (1854-1930). Youngest son of W.E. Gladstone; liberal politician; first governor-general and high commissioner of South Afirca 1910-14.

GLADSTONE, W.E. (1809-98). Prime minister of England 1869, 1880-5, 1886, 1892-4.

GOKHALE, GOPAL KRISHNA (1866-1915). Teacher and journalist at Poona; member of Bombay legislative council 1899-1901 and of imperial legislative council 1901-15; president of Indian National Congress 1905.

GRIFFIN, LEPEL HENRY (1838-1908). Entered Indian civil service 1860; agent of governor-general for central India 1881-8; retired 1889.

GRIFFITH, ARTHUR (1872-1922). Irish politician and journalist.

HAMILTON, LORD GEORGE FRANCIS (1845-1927). Conservative politician; under-secretary of state for India 1874-80; first lord of admiralty 1885-6, 1886-92; secretary of state for India 1895-1903.

HARDIE, JAMES KEIR (1856-1915). British Labour leader; visited India 1907.

HARDINGE, CHARLES, BARON HARDINGE OF PENSHURST (1858-1944). Entered Foreign Office 1880; assistant under-secretary of state 1903-4; ambassador to Russia 1904-6; permanent under-secretary of state 1906-10, 1916-20; governor-general of India 1910-16.

HARRISON, FREDERIC (1831-1923). Author and positivist.

HART-DAVIES, THOMAS. (1849-1920). In Indian civil service 1869-97; M.P. 1906-10.

HUME, ALLAN OCTAVIAN (1829-1912). Joined East India Company's service 1849; secretary to government of India 1870-9; general secretary of Indian National Congress 1885-1907; returned to Britain 1892; visited India last time 1893-4.

HYNDMAN, H.M. (1842-1921). British socialist leader.

IMAM, SYED HASAN (1871-1933). Lawyer; president of Indian National Congress (special session) 1918.

IYENGAR, A. RANGASWAMI (1877-1934). Journalist at Madras.

IYENGAR, KASTURI RANGA (1859-1923). Lawyer; later proprietor and editor of the Madras *Hindu* 1905-23.

IYER, G. SUBRAMANIA (1855-1916). Journalist; editor of *Hindu* 1878-98.

IYER, L.A. GOVINDARAGHAVA (1867-1935). Lawyer at Madras; president of National Liberal Federation of India 1921.

IYER, S. SUBRAMANIA (1842-1924). Lawyer and politician at Madras; member of Madras legislative council 1884-8; judge of Madras high court 1895-1907.

IYER, V. KRISHNASWAMI (1863-1911). Lawyer at Madras; member of governor's executive council 1911.

JAH, HUMAYUN (1837-93). Landowner and businessman at Madras.

JARDINE, JOHN (1844-1919). Entered Indian civil service 1864; appointed judge of Bombay high court 1885; acting chief justice 1895; retired 1897.

JINNAH, MAHOMED ALI (1876-1948). Lawyer and politician; president of Muslim League 1916, 1920, and from 1934 until his death; governor-general of Pakistan 1947-8.

JOSHI, GANESH VYANKATESH (1851-1911). Teacher.

KARANDIKAR, R.P. (1847-1939). Lawyer at Satara.

KATHAWATE, A.V. (1846-1907). Sanskrit teacher; in Bombay education service.

KELKAR, N.C. (1872-1947). Lawyer, journalist and politician at Poona.

KENWORTHY, J.M. (1886-1953). Served in Royal Navy 1902-19; M.P. 1919-31; left Liberal for Labour Party 1926; became tenth Baron Strabolgi 1934.

KHAN, ABDUL LATIF (1828-93). Bengal Muslim leader; entered government service 1846; appointed deputy magistrate 1849; founder and secretary of Mahomedan Literary Society 1863.

KHAN, SYED AHMED (1817-98). Joined East India Company's service as clerk 1837; retired as subordinate judge 1876; founded Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh 1877; member of imperial legislative council 1878-80, 1881-3; knighted 1888.

KHAPARDE, G.S. (1854-1938). Lawyer at Amraoti.

KHARE, D.A. (1856-1916). Lawyer and politician.

KIMBERLEY, FIRST EARL OF (JOHN WODEHOUSE) (1826-1902). Lord privy seal 1868-70; colonial secretary 1870-4; 1880-2; secretary of state for India 1882-5, 1886; foreign secretary 1894-5.

KNIGHT, HOLFORD (1877-1936). Barrister; Labour M.P. 1929-35.

KNIGHT, ROBERT (1826-90). Editor successively of *Bombay Times, Times of India, Indian Statesman, Indian Economist, Friend of India* and *Statesman.*

KRISHNAVARMA, SHYAMJI (1857-1930). Scholar, journalist and politician.

KUNZRU, H.N. (1887-1978). Prominent member of Servants of India Society; Liberal politician.

LAL, HARKISHEN (1864-1937). Barrister and businessman; minister in Panjab government 1921-3.

LANSDOWNE, FIFTH MARQUESS OF (HENRY CHARLES KEITH PETTY FITZMAURICE) (1845-1927). Under-secretary for war 1872-4; under-secretary of state for India 1880; governor-general of Canada 1883-8; governor-general of India 1888-94; secretary of state for war 1895-1900; foreign secretary 1900-5.

LLOYD GEORGE, DAVID (1863-1945). Liberal M.P. 1890-1945; president of board of trade 1905-8; chancellor of exchequer 1908-15; prime minister of Britain 1916-22; created earl 1945.

LUNN, W. (1870-1942). Labour M.P. 1918-42.

LYTTON, FIRST EARL OF (EDWARD ROBERT BULWER) (1831-91). Author and diplomatist; governor-general of India 1876-80.

MACARTHUR, JAMES (1848-1922). Bishop of Bombay and later of Southampton.

MACDONALD, J. RAMSAY (1860-1937). Labour leader and statesman; prime minister of Britain 1924, 1929-31, 1931-5.

MACKARNESS, F. (1854-1920). Lawyer and Liberal M.P. 1900-15.

MCLAREN, W.S. BRIGHT (1853-1912). Businessman and Liberal M.P. 1880-6, 1892-1916.

MACLEAN, NEIL (1875-1953). Labour M.P. 1918-50.

MAHMUDABAD. RAJA OF (MOHAMED ALI MOHAMMAD KHAN) (1877-1931). President of All-India Muslim League 1917, 1918 and 1928; home member of U.P. government 1921-6.

MAHOMED, SYED (1869-1919). Landowner and politician of Madras; president of Indian National Congress 1913.

MAJITHIA, SARDAR DYAL SINGH (1849-98). Jagirdar; founder of *Tribune,* Lahore.

MALABARI, B.M. (1853-1912). Journalist and social reformer.

MALAVIYA, MADAN MOHAN (1861-1946). Lawyer and educationist; president of Indian National Congress 1909, 1918; founder and vice-chancellor of Banaras Hindu University 1919-40.

MAZHAR-UL-HAQ (1866-1930). Landowner and lawyer.

MAZUMDAR, A.C. (1850-1922). Lawyer; president of Indian National Congress 1916.

MEHTA, P.M. (1845-1915). Lawyer and politician; member of Bombay legislative council 1887-9, 1893-4 and of Indian legislative council 1894-6, 1898-1901; preisdent of Indian National Congress 1890.

MESTON, JAMES SCORGIE, FIRST BARON (1865-1943). Entered Indian civil service 1885; lieutenant-governor of United Provinces 1912-18; finance member of viceroy's council 1918-19; created baron 1919.

MILNER, ALFRED (1845-1925). High commissioner for South Africa 1897-1905; created viscount 1902; member of Lloyd George's cabinet 1916-21.

MINTO, FOURTH EARL OF (GLIBERT JOHN MURRAY KYNYMOND ELIOTT) (1845-1914). Governor-general of Canada 1898-1904; governor-general of India 1905-10.

MITRA, RAJENDRA LAL (1824-91). Scholar; director of Wards' Institution in Calcutta 1856-80; leading member and later president of British Indian Association.

MITRA, T.N. (1844-95). Lawyer and jurist; secretary of British Indian Association.

MITTER, B.C. (1872-1930). Barrister at Calcutta; standing counsel to government of India 1910-17; member of Bengal legislative council 1910-16 and of council of state 1921.

MITTER, R.C. (1840-99). Judge of Calcutta high court 1874-90.

MONTAGU, EDWIN SAMUEL (1879-1924). Liberal M.P. 1906-22; under-secretary of state for India 1910-14; financial secretary to treasury 1914-16; chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster 1915; minister of munitions 1916; secretary of state for India 1917-22.

MOONJE, B.S. (1872-1948). Eye surgeon and politician at Nagpur; working president of All-India Hindu Mahasabha 1927-35.

MORLEY, JOHN (1838-1923). Author and statesman; chief secretary for Ireland 1886, 1892-5; secretary of state for India 1905-10; created viscount 1908.

MORRELL, PHILIP (1870-1943). Liberal M.P. 1906-10.

MOZOOMDAR, P.C. (1840-1905). Brahmo missionary.

MUDALIAR, S. RAMASWAMI (1852-92). Lawyer.

MUDHOLKAR, R.N. (1857-1921). Lawyer; president of Indian National Congress 1912.

MUKERJI, J.K. (1801-88). Large landowner in Uttarpara.

NAIDU, P. RUNGIAH (1828-1902). Landowner and lawyer.

NAIDU, SAROJINI (1897-1949). Poetess and politician; president of Indian National Congress 1925; governor of United Provinces 1947-9.

NAIR, C. SANKARAN (1857-1934). Lawyer and judge of Madras high court; member of governor-general's council 1915-19 and of secretary of state's council 1920-1.

NAMJOSHI, M.B. (1853-96). Landowner and businessman at Poona.

NAOROJI, DADABHAI (1825-1917). Businessman, journalist and politician; first Indian member of British Parliament 1892-5; president of Indian National Congress 1886, 1893, 1906.

NATARAJAN, K. (1868-1948). Journalist and social reformer.

NATESAN, G.A. (1873-1949). Journalist and politician at Madras.

NEHRU, JAWAHARLAL (1889-1964). Man of letters and statesman; president of Indian National Congress 1929, 1936, 1937, 1946, 1951-4; prime minister of India 1947-64.

NEHRU, MOTILAL (1861-1931). Lawyer; president of Indian National Congress 1919 and 1928.

NIGHTINGALE, FLORENCE (1820-1910). Reformer of hospital nursing; keenly interested in Indian social life.

NIVEDITA, SISTER (MARGARET ELIZABETH NOBLE) (1867-1911). Disciple of Swami Vivekanand; came to Calcutta 1898.

NORTHBROOK, FIRST EARL OF (THOMAS GEORGE BARING) (1826-1904). Under-secretary in India Office 1859-64, at War Office 1861, 1868, at Home Office 1864; secretary to admiralty 1866; governor-general of India 1872-6; first lord of admiralty 1880-84; special commissioner to Egypt 1884.

NORTON, EARDLEY (1852-1932). Lawyer and politician at Madras.

O'CONNELL, DANIEL (1775-1847). Irish national leader.

O'DONNELL, C.J. (1850-1934). In Indian civil service 1870-1900; M.P. 1906-10.

O'GRADY, J. (1866-1934). Trade union leader; M.P. 1906-10.

OLCOTT, H.S. (1832-1907). Founded, with H.P. Blavatsky, Theosophical Society 1875; arrived India 1879.

PAL, BIPIN CHANDRA (1858-1932). Author and journalist.

PAL, K.D. (1838-84). Assistant secretary and later secretary, British Indian Association 1857-84; editor, *Hindoo Patriot* 1861-84.

PARANJPE, S.M. (1864-1929). Teacher and journalist.

PARNELL, CHARLES STEWART (1846-91). Irish national leader.

PATEL, V.J. (1873-1933). Lawyer and politician; general secretary of Indian National Congress 1919-20; president of Indian Legislative Assembly 1925-30.

PAUL, H.W. (1853-1935). Journalist; Liberal M.P. 1892-5.

PHULE, JOTIRAO GOVINDRAO (1827-90). Social reformer concerned with the rights of non-Brahmans.

PILLAI, G.P. (1864-1903). Journalist and author.

PILLAI, P. KESAVA (1860-1933). Lawyer; joint general secretary, Indian National Congress 1918; later active in Justice Party and Madras Presidency Association.

PRASAD, SHIVA (1823-95). Landowner in Banaras; author; in N.W.P. education service; made Raja 1874.

RAI, LAJPAT (1865-1928). Author, lawyer and social reformer; president of Indian National Congress (special session at Calcutta) 1920.

RAJAGOPALACHARI, C. (1879-1972). Madras lawyer and politician; first chief minister of Madras 1937-9; first Indian governor-general of India 1948-50.

RAM, BAKSHI JAISHI (1862-1900). Lawyer and politician.

RANADE, M.G. (1842-1901). Entered Bombay judicial service 1871; author and social reformer; member of Bombay legislative council 1885-7, 1891-2; judge of Bombay high court from 1893 until his death.

RAO, MADHAVA (1828-91). Prime minister of Travancore 1858-72, of Indore 1873-5 and of Baroda 1875-82.

RAO, N. SUBBA (1855-1910). Lawyer; general secretary of Indian National Congress 1914-17.

RAO, RAGHUNATH (1831-1912). Joined Madras government service and rose to be deputy collector; *diwan* of Indore.

RAY, PRITHWIS CHANDRA (1870-1927). Editor, *Indian World* 1905-14 and *Bengalee* 1921-4; 'founder' of National Liberal League, Bengal 1918.

RAY, SARALA (1861-1946). Brahmo; wife of Dr P.K. Ray, first Indian principal, Presidency College, Calcutta; president, All-India Women's Conference 1931.

REAY, ELEVENTH BARON (DONALD JAMES MACKAY) (1839-1921). Governor of Bombay 1885-90; under-secretary of state for India 1894-5.

REDMOND, JOHN EDWARD (1856-1918). Irish political leader.

REID, R.T. (1846-1923). Liberal M.P. 1880-1905; lord chancellor with title of Lord Loreburn 1905.

RIPON, FIRST MARQUESS OF (GEORGE FREDERICK SAMUEL ROBINSON) (1827-1909). Secretary of state for India 1866; governor-general of India 1880-4; colonial secretary 1892-5; lord privy seal 1905-8.

ROBERTS, CHARLES (1865-1959). Liberal M.P. 1906-18, 1922-3; under-secretary of state for India 1914-15.

ROBERTS, J. HERBERT (1863-1955). Liberal M.P. 1892-1918; knighted 1908; became Baron Clwyd 1919.

RONALDSHAY, LORD (1876-1961). Governor of Bengal 1917-22; later Lord Zetland; secretary of state for India 1935-40.

RUTHERFORD, V. H. (1860-1934). Physician; Liberal M.P. 1906-10.

SALISBURY, THIRD MARQUESS OF (ROBERT ARTHUR TALBOT GASCOYNE-CECIL) (1830-1903). Conservative politician; secretary of state for India 1866-7, 1874-8; prime minister of Britain 1885, 1886-92, 1895-1902.

SAMARTH, N.M. (1866-1926). Bombay lawyer and politician.

SANDHURST, LORD (1855-1921). Governor of Bombay 1895-1900.

SAPRU, T.B. (1875-1949). Lawyer and Liberal statesman; member of U.P. legislative council 1913-16; member of imperial legislative council 1915-20; law member of viceroy's executive council 1920-3; privy councillor 1934.

SARAN, ISWAR (1874-1947). Lawyer at Allahabad.

SASTRI, V.S. SRINIVASA (1869-1946). Madras Liberal politician; president of Servants of India Society 1915-27; first agent of government of India in South Africa 1927-9; member, royal commission on labour 1929; privy councillor 1925.

SATYAMURTI, S. (1887-1943). Madras lawyer and politician.

SAYANI, R.M. (1847-1902). Attorney; president of Indian National Congress 1896.

SCHWANN, CHARLES (1844-1991). Merchant; M.P. 1886-1918.

SETALVAD, CHIMANLAL H. (1866-1947). Bombay lawyer and politician.

SIDGWICK, HENRY (1838-1900). Philosopher and teacher at Cambridge.

SINGH, RAJA RAMPAL (1848-1909). Landlord and politician.

SINHA, SACHCHIDANANDA (1871-1950). Bihari journalist and politician.

SINHA, SATYENDRA PRASANNO (1864-1928). Advocate-general of Bengal 1905-9; law member of viceroy's council 1909-10; president of Indian National Congress 1915; created baron 1919; under-secretary of state for India 1919-20; governor of Bihar and Orissa 1920-1; member of judicial committee of privy council 1926-8.

SLAGG, JOHN (1841-89). Merchant at Manchester; M.P. 1880-5, 1887-9.

SPOOR, BENJAMIN CHARLES (1875-1928). Labour M.P. 1918-28; member, national executive of Labour Party 1919.

STEAD, W.T. (1849-1912). Journalist and author.

SUNDARARAMAN, K. (1854-1938). Teacher; in Madras education service.

SYDENHAM, BARON (GEORGE SYDENHAM CLARKE) (1848-1933). Governor of Victoria 1901-3; governor of Bombay 1907-13; created baron 1913.

TAGORE, J.M. (1831-1908). Large landowner in Bengal.

TAGORE, RABINDRANATH (1861-1941). Poet and philosopher; awarded Nobel prize for literature 1913.

TATA, J.N. (1839-1904). Pioneer of Indian industries.

TELANG, K.T. (1850-93). Lawyer, author and social reformer at Bombay; member of Bombay legislative council 1886-89; judge of Bombay high court 1889-93.

TILAK, BAL GANGADHAR (1856-1920). Teacher and journalist at Poona; jailed for sedition 1897-8, 1908-14.

TYABJI, BADRUDDIN (1844-1906). Barrister; president of Indian National Congress 1887; judge of Bombay high court 1895-1906.

VARMA, GANGA PRASAD (1863-1914). Journalist at Lucknow.

VIJIARAGHAVACHARIAR, C. (1852-1944). Lawyer; president of Indian National Congress 1920.

VIRARAGHAVA CHARIAR, M. (1857-1906). Managing proprietor of the Madras *Hindu* 1878-1905.

VIVEKANAND (NARENDRANATH DATTA) (1863-1902). Hindu missionary; disciple of Ramakrishna and founder of Ramakrishna order.

WACHA, D.E. (1844-1936). Businessman, journalist and politician; president of Indian National Congress 1901.

WEBB, ALFRED JOHN (1834-1908). Irish author and politician; president of Indian National Congress 1894.

WEDDERBURN, WILLIAM (1838-1918). Entered Indian civil service 1860; judge of Bombay high court 1885; officiating chief secretary to Bombay government 1886-7; M.P. 1893-1900; president of Indian National Congress 1889, 1910.

WEDGWOOD, JOSIAH (1872-1943). M.P. 1906-42; left Liberal for Labour Party 1919; created baron 1942.

WHITE, D.S. (1832-89). Assistant to director of public instruction, Madras; president of Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India.

WILLINGDON, FIRST MARQUIS OF (FREEMAN-FREEMAN THOMAS) (1866-1941). M.P. 1900-10; governor of Bombay 1913-18 and of Madras 1919-24; governor-general of Canada 1926-30; viceroy of India 1931-6.

WOOD, MARTIN (1828-1907). Editor of *Times of India* 1867 and *Bombay Review* 1878-80; author of *Things of India Made Plain* 1889.

WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM (1835-1917). Grandson of the famous poet; in Bombay education service 1861-90.

YULE, GEORGE (1828-92). Businessman; president of Indian National Congress 1888.

Glossary

ANGLO-INDIAN: in nineteenth century usage, a European residing, or having resided in India.
AVATAR: incarnation.
BABOO, BABU: a title of respect in northern India.
BANDE MATARAM: salutation to the mother or motherland.
BRAHMA: the supreme being.
CHELA: a disciple.
DIWAN: a minister; a chief officer.
FERINGHEE: a European; a foreigner.
GUP: rumour; gossip.
JAGIRDAR: the holder of a large estate.
LAKH: a hundred thousand.
LALA: a title of respect in northern India.
MAHARAJA: a great king; a title.
MAHATMA: a great soul.
MAMOOL: custom; practice; usage.
MAMULI: ordinary.
MASOOR KI DAL: lentil.
MAULVI, MOLVI, MOULVI: a learned Muslim.
MAYA: illusion.
MELA: a fair.
MOFUSSIL, MUFASSIL: the country as opposed to the principal town.
NAWAB: a governor or nobleman; a title.
PAL: a piece of cloth for making a shelter from the sun.
PANDAL: a pavilion.
RAJ: kingdom; rule.
RAJA: king; ruler.
SARDAR, SIRDAR: a chief.
SHAMIANA, SHAMIANAH: a canopy.
SWADESHI: of one's own country; home-made.
SWARAJ, SWARAJYA: self-government; home rule.
TALUK, TALUQ: a sub-division of a district; an estate.
TALUKDAR, TALUQDAR: the holder of an estate.
TAMASHA: a show; a spectacle.
VAKIL: a pleader or lawyer.
YOGI: an ascetic.
ZAMINDAR, ZEMINDAR: a landholder, paying revenue directly to government.

Abbreviations

BL	British Library
CUL	Cambridge University Library
GP	Gokhale Papers
IOL	India Office Library
IOR	India Office Records
J & P	Judicial and Public Department
K.-W.	Keep-With (appendage to official file)
NAI	National Archives of India
NMM&L	Nehru Memorial Museum & Library
NP	Naoroji Papers
Pol.	Political
PRO	Public Record Office
RNP	Report on the Native Papers

Appendices

A. Origin and Composition of the Congress
B. Tentative Rules in regard to Certain Matters Connected with the Indian National Congress Framed by the Committee Appointed by Resolution I of 1887; Addenda
C. Rules for the Conduct of Business, 1894
D. Rules for the Conduct of Business, 1895
E. The Indian National Congresss. Draft Rules in regard to its Constitution and Working, 1895
F. Constitution of the Indian National Congress, 1899
G. Constitution of the Indian National Congress, 1906
H. Constitution of the Indian National Congress Organisation, 1908
I. Constitution of the Indian National Congress Organisation, 1912
J. Constitution of the Indian National Congress Organisation, 1915

Appendix A

ORIGIN AND COMPOSITION OF THE CONGRESS

In March 1885 it was decided to hold a meeting of Representatives from all parts of India at the then coming Christmas. Poona was considered the most central and therefore suitable place and the following circular was issued.

"A Conference of the Indian National Union will be held at Poona from the 25th to the 31st of December 1885.

"The Conference will be composed of Delegates—leading politicians well acquainted with the English language—from all parts of the Bengal, Bombay and Madras Presidencies.

"The direct objects of the Conference will be:— (1) to enable all the most earnest labourers in the cause of national progress to become personally known to each other; (2) to discuss and decide upon the political operations to be undertaken during the ensuing year.

"Indirectly this Conference will form the germ of a Native Parliament and, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is still wholly unfit for any form of representative institutions. The first Conference will decide whether the next shall be again held at Poona, or whether following the precedent of the British Association, the Conferences shall be held year by year at different important centres.

"This year the Conference being in Poona, Mr. Chiplonkar and others of the Sarvajanik Sabha, have consented to form a Reception Committee, in whose hands will rest the whole of the local arrangements. The Peshwah's Garden near the Parbati Hill will be utilized both as a place of meeting (it contains a fine Hall, like the garden, the property of the Sabha) and as a residence for the delegates, each of whom will be there provided with suitable quarters. Much importance is attached to this since when all thus reside *together* for a week, far greater opportunities for friendly intercourse will be afforded than if the delegates were (as at the time of the late Bombay demonstrations) scattered about in dozens of private lodging houses all over the town.

"Delegates are expected to find their own way to and from Poona—but from the time they reach the Poona Railway Station until they again leave it, everything that they can need, carriage, accommodation, food, &c., will be provided for them gratuitously.

"The cost thus involved will be defrayed from the Reception Fund, which the Poona Association most liberally offers to provide in the first instance, but to which all delegates, whose means warrant their incurring this further expense, will be at liberty to contribute any sum they please. Any unutilized balance of such donations will be carried forward as a nucleus for next year's Reception fund.

"It is believed that exclusive of our Poona friends, the Bombay Presidency, including Sindh and the Berars, will furnish about 20 delegates, Madras and Lower Bengal each about the same number, and the N.W. Provinces, Oudh, and the Punjaub together about half this number."

A few days, however, before the time fixed for the assemblage, and after the Sarvajanik Sabha had completed all their preparations at Poona, several cases of cholera occurred there. These cases might or might not be the commencement of a severe outbreak, travellers arriving tired at a station where there is cholera are notoriously proved to take the disease, and it was therefore considered prudent despite the difficulties attendant on any change at so late a period, to hold the Conference, (which it had in the meantime been decided to call the CONGRESS) at Bombay.

Thanks to the exertions of the Bombay Presidency Association and the liberality of the Managers of the Goculdas Tejpal Sanscrit College and Boarding Trust (who not only placed the grand buildings above the Gowalia Tank at the Association's disposal, but also supervised the furbishing up, furnishing and lighting of these large premises on behalf of the Association), everything was ready by the morning of the 27th when the REPRESENTATIVES (as it was determined to designate them to distinguish them from the *Delegates,* the title by which the Indian Representatives *sent to England* had become popularly known) began to arrive.

During the whole day and far into the night of the 27th, informal discussions were carried on between the Representatives and the order of the proceedings for the next three days was thus settled.

It should, however, be noted that about two hours in the evening were devoted to receiving the Hon'ble Sir W. Wedderburn Bart, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Jardine, Colonel Phelps, Professor Wordsworth and a large number of the leading citizens of Bombay who most kindly came to the Goculdas Tejpal College, to welcome the Representatives and express their sympathy with the work on which these were about to enter.

The first meeting took place the next day, on the 28th December. Very close on one hundred gentlemen attended, but a considerable number of these being Government servants like Mr. D.S. White, President of the Eurasian Association. Dewan Bahadur Rubgande Rugonath Row, Collector of Madras, the Hon'ble Mahadeo G. Ranade, Member of the Legislative Council and Small Cause Court Judge of Poona, Lalla Baijnath of Agra, Professor Abaji Vishnoo Kattawatha of Ahmedabad, Professor Kadambi Sundararaman, M.A. of Arcot, Mr. T. Narasemina Iyer of Tiruvellur, Professor R.G. Bhandarkar of the Deccan College and many others did not (with one exception) take any direct part in the discussions, but attended only as *Amici curiae,* to listen and advise, so that the actual number of *Representatives* was, only so far as the records go, (though it is feared some few names have been omitted from the Register) 72, *viz:*—

From Karrachi, 2; Viramgam, 1; Surat, 6; Poona, 8; Calcutta, 3; Agra, 2; Benares, 1; Simla, 1; Lucknow, 3; Allahabad, 1; Lahore, 1; Amballa, 1; Ahmedabad, 3; Bombay, 18; Madras, 8; Berhampore, 1; Masulipatam, 1; Chinglipat, 1; Tanjore, 2; Kumbakonum, 1; Madura, 1; Tinnevelly, 1; Coimbatore, 1; Salem, 1; Cuddahpa, 1; Anantapore, 1; Bellary, 1.

The following is a nominal list of these Representatives so far as they entered their names in the Register.

Karachi.—Messrs. Dayaram Jethmal and Oodcram Moolchund, Pleaders.

Viramgaum.—Mr. Harilal Mayaram, Vakil and Municipal Commissioner and representative of the Loka Somgraha Sabha.

Surat.—Messrs. H.H. Dhruva, B.A., LL.B., Pleader and Municipal Commissioner, member, managing committee Praja Hitwardhak Sabha; Mancharshaw Pallanji Kaikobad, Honorary Secretary, Praja Hitwardhak Sabha; Gokuldas Bhaidass, Vakil, Municipal Commissioner, Pleader; Manchhashankar Jiwanram, B.A., LL.B.; Hosangji Burjorji, B.A., LL.B., Pleader; Narandass Parshotamdass, merchant and Vice-President, Praja Hitwardhak Sabha.

Poona.—Rao Bahadoor Krishnaji Laxaman Nulkar, Chairman, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha; Messrs. Gangaram Bhau Mashke, Pleader, District Court; Ramchandra Moreshwar Sane, Marathi editor, *Dnyan Prakash;* Sitaram Hari Chiplonkar, Honorary Secretary, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha and editor of the *Quarterly Journal* of the P.S. Sabha; Shivaram Hari Sathe, Secretary, Poona Sarvajanik Sabha; Dr. Pandurang Gopal, G.G.M.C.; Mr. Waman Shivaram Apte, M.A., Principal, Fergusson College, and Superintendent, New English School; Ramchandra Keshaw Limagi, Pleader, District Court; Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, M.A., Professor, Fergusson College, and editor of the *Maratha* and *Kesari.*

Calcutta.—Messrs. W.C. Bonnerji, Barrister-at-law, Standing Counsel; G.B. Mookerji, editor of the *Nababibhakar,* Pleader, High Court; Norendranath Sen, Proprietor and editor, *Indian Mirror.*

Agra.—Messrs. Babu Jamandas, Pleader, Municipal Commissioner, and editor of the *Nassim;* Babu Prabhu Dayal Chowdhry, Pleader.

Benares.—Mr. Ram Kali Chowdhry, pensioned Sub-Judge.

Simla.—Mr. A.O. Hume.

Lucknow.—Messrs. Munshi Gangaprasad Varma, proprietor of the *Hindusthani;* Pranauth Pandit, teacher, Lord Canning College; Munshi Jawala Prasad, Pleader.

Amballa.—Babu Murlidhar, Pleader, representing the *Tribune.*

Lahore.—Satyanand Agnihotri, Brahmo missionary.

Allahabad.—Mr. J. Ghosal, editor of the *Indian Union.*

Ahmedabad.—Messrs. Keshawlal Motilal, Vakil, Municipal Commissioner, and Manockjee P. Mody, Vakil, Secretary of the Gujerat Sabha.

Bombay.—The Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji, Member of the Legislative Council; the Hon. Kashinath T. Telang, C.I.E., Member of the Legislative Council; Messrs. Pherozeshaw Merwanji Mehta, Barrister-at-law, Chairman of the Municipal Corporation; Dinshaw Edalji Wacha, Secretary, Bombay Presidency Association; Dinshaw Pestonji Kanga, Solicitor; Ghanasham Nilkanth Nadkarni, Vakil, High Court,: Moolji Bhowanidas Barbhaya, Solicitor; Tribhuwandas Mungaldas Nathubhoy; Jehangir B. Wacha, merchant; Rahimtula M. Sayani, Solicitor; Bal Mungesh Wagle, Barrister-at-law; A. K. Sethna, Barrister-at-law; Behramji M. Malabari, proprietor & editor, *Indian Spectator;* Ganesh Ramchandra Kirloskar, Vakil, High Court; Shamrao Vithal, Vakil, High Court: Abdalla Mehrali Dharamsi, Solicitor; Javerilal Umiashankar Yajnik, Merchant; N.G. Chandavarkar, editor of the *Indu Prakash,* and Bombay Delegate to England.

Madras.—Messrs. P. Rungiah Naidu, President of the Madras Mahajana Sabha, Municipal Commissioner, and Vakil, High Court, Madras; the Hon'ble S. Subramania Aiyar, B.L., Member of the Legislative Council and Vakil, High Court, Madras; P. Ananda Charlu, B.L., Vakil, High Court, and Municipal Commissioner, Madras; G. Subramania Aiyar, B.A., editor of the *Hindu,* Madras; M. Viraraghava Chariar, B.A., Sub-Editor of the *Hindu,* Madras and Secretary, Madras Mahajana Sabha; C. Singarvelloo Moodeliar, Municipal Commissioner, Madras, Merchant and Trustee of the Patchappa charity; M.E. Shriranga Charriar, B.A., B.L., High Court, Madras; Dr. S.V. Athalye, Medical Practitioner, Madras.

Berhampore.—Mr. M. Vishwanath Aiyar, B.A., Pleader, District Court, Ganjam, and Municipal Commissionr, Berhampore.

Masulipatam.—Mr. S. Venkata Subba Royadu, B.L., Vakil of the High Court and Pleader, District Court, Masulipatam.

Chingleput.—Mr. M. Y. Ramanuja Charriar, Pleader, Chingleput.

Tanjore.—Messrs. S. A. Swaminath Aiyar, Public Prosecutor and President, People's Association, Tanjore; N. Narayanswami Aiyar, Landholder, Tanjore.

Kumbakonum.—Mr. K. Pattabirama Aiyar, Landholder, Kumbakonum.

Madura.—Mr. P. Subramania Aiyar, Madura.

Tinnevelly.—Mr. Peter Paul Pillay, landholder and schoolmaster, Tinnevelly.

Coimbatore.—Mr. S.P. Narasimhulu Naidu, editor, *Crescent,* and member of the Local Board, Coimbatore.

Salem.—Mr. Kristnaswamy Rout, Salem.

Caddapah.—Mr. M. Nageswara Row, Pleader, Caddapah.

Anantapore.—Mr. P. Kesava Pillay, Pleader and member of the Local Board, Anantapore.

Bellary.—Mr. A. Sabapathy Moodeliyar, merchant, landholder, and chairman of the Municipality, Bellary.

Not only were all parts of India thus represented, but also most classes; there were barristers, solicitors, pleaders, merchants, landowners, bankers, medical men, newspaper editors and proprietors; principals and professors of independent colleges, headmasters of schools, religious teachers and reformers. There were Hindus of many castes, high and low, Mahomedans (though owing to certain unfortunate accidents far fewer than were expected) and Christians, both native, Eurasian and European. All the leading Native political Associations and the principal Anglo-native newspapers were represented; there were members of Legislative Councils, Presidents and members of Municipal Committees and Local Boards, and it is difficult to conceive any gathering of this restricted number more thoroughly representative of the entire nation than was this Congress of which the *Bombay Gazette* had the following interesting notice:— "A new era is marked in the political history of this Presidency with the organisation of what is called a National Conference which held on Monday its first sitting in Bombay. Poona was at first selected for this meeting, and Delegates from all parts of India had already assembled there; but owing to the prevalence of cholera in the capital of the Deccan, the Delegates had to be brought down to this city, and here they have been accommodated in the spacious building of the institution which is known as "The Goculdas Tejpal Boarding-school, Sanscrit College, and Library," situated at Gowalia Tank. Before commencing the serious work for which the Conference is held, an opportunity was given at an informal gathering on Sunday afternoon to those who are strangers to this city to be introduced to some of the representative men belonging to the native community of Bombay. And the spectacle which presented itself of men representing the various races and communities, castes and sub-divisions of caste, religions and sub-divisions of religions, met together in one place to form themselves, if possible, into one political whole, was most unique and interesting. For they had come not from the Presidency towns alone, but from all parts of India, and their presence afforded a most interesting study of the heads and head-dresses typical of the numerous variety of castes and communities inhabiting this country. There were men from Madras, the blackness of whose complexion seemed to be made blacker by spotless white turbans which some of them wore. A few others hailing from that Presidency were bare-headed and barefooted, and otherwise lightly clad, their bodies from the waist upwards being only partially protected by muslin shawls. It may fairly be presumed that they are the leading lights of the towns which they represent, and as such it may be supposed that they are well educated. But they have preferred to retain their national dress and manners, and in this respect they presented a marked contrast to the Delegates from Bengal. Some of these appeared in entirely European costume, while others could be easily recognised as Babus by the peculiar cap with a flap behind which they

donned. None of them wore the gold rings or diamond pendents which adorned the ears of some of the Madrasees; nor had they their foreheads painted, like their more orthodox and more conservative brethren from the Southern Presidency. Then there were Hindustanis from such places as Delhi, Agra, Lucknow and Benares, some of whom wore muslin skull-caps and dresses chiefly made of the same fine cloth. On the other hand, there were Delegates from the North-West—bearded, bulky, and large-limbed men—in their coats and flowing robes of different hues and in turbans like those worn by Sikh soldiers. There were stalwart Sindhees from Kurrachee, wearing their own tall hat surmounted by a broad brim at the top. In this strange group were to be observed the familiar figures of Banyas from Gujarat, of Marathas in their "cart-wheel" turbans, and of Parsees in their not very elegant head-dress, which they themselves have likened to a slanting roof. Some members of this community had, however, appeared in their "phenta," which is now largely patronised by the younger generation of Parsees, and which threatens in course of time to supersede the time-honoured turban. All these men, assembled in the same hall, presented such a variety of costumes and complexions, that a similar scene can scarcely be witnessed anywhere except at a fancy ball. After the ceremony of introduction had been concluded, the Delegates freely exchanged with one another their views upon things in general and politics in particular. They included a large number of lawyers and conductors of newspapers, and they all appeared to have agreed in the opinion that they had some political aspiration which could by no possibility clash with opposing interests, and that for the promotion of their common object there was a necessity for concerted action. It may be easily imagined that there were some enthusiasts in their number, one of whom was profuse in the expression of his unbounded joy at seeing in flesh and blood good men and true working for the public weal, whom he had formerly known only by name."

Source: *Proceedings of the First Indian National Congress Held at Bombay, on the 28th, 29th and 30th December, 1885*, pp. 4-14.

Appendix B

TENTATIVE RULES IN REGARD TO CERTAIN MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS FRAMED BY THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY RESOLUTION I OF 1887

I. There shall be, yearly, during the last fortnight of each Calendar year, a meeting of the delegates of the people of India which shall bear the name of *The Indian National Congress.*

II. It shall, from year to year, assemble at such places and on such dates as shall have been resolved on by the last preceding Congress; it being, however, left open to the Reception Committee (Rule XII) (should real necessity for this arise) to change, in consultation with the several Standing Congress Committees (Rule III), the place fixed by the Congress for some other locality.

III. There shall be, as resolved at the 2nd National Congress (XIII of 1886), Standing Congress Committees at all important centres. These Committees are at present as in Appendix 1, but the Congress may at any sitting add to or diminish the number of these Committees, or alter their jurisdictions. The delegates from any jurisdiction, attending a Congress, shall form the Standing Congress Committee for the jurisdiction for the ensuing year, and they shall have power to add to their number, and appoint their own executive. There is at present a General Secretary holding office at the pleasure of the several Congress Committees, but henceforth a General Secretary shall be elected at each Congress for the ensuing year.

IV. It shall be the primary duty of all Standing Congress Committees, to promote the political education of the people of their several jurisdictions throughout the year, and to endeavour, by the circulation of brief and simple tracts and catechisms written in the vernacular of that people, by the holding of public meetings at important centres, and by sending competent men round to lecture and explain these subjects, and by all other open and laudable means, to imbue the intelligent and respectable classes everywhere with a healthy sense of their duties and rights as good citizens. Care has to be especially taken to impress the people with a conviction 1st, of the immense benefits that the country has derived from British rule and of the sincere desire that pervades the British nation to do the very best they can for the people of India; 2ndly, with some idea of the more important shortcomings of that rule, due partly to the unavoidable ignorance of the rulers of the real condition of the ruled, and partly to the failure of these latter to make known in a definite and intelligible form their wants and wishes; and 3rdly, with the knowledge that all defects in the existing form of the administration may surely, though perhaps slowly, be amended, if the people will only unite in loyal, temperate, and persistent demands for the redress of grievances through such persons as they may choose as exponents of their views.

V. To enable the several Committees to carry out this great work successfully, they are empowered to create as many Sub-Committees, (to each of whom a definite sphere of action be assigned), within their jurisdictions, as may be necessary and possible, and they are further empowered to associate themselves with any existing associations and work with them and through their various branches as Sub-Committees.

VI. Each year, each Standing Congress shall report fully the work that it has done during the year, accompanying the same, as far as may be practicable, by English translation of all the tracts, leaflets and the like that it may have issued during the year; such reports shall be in English, and shall be so despatched as to reach the Secretary of the Reception Committee (Rule XII) on or before the 15th of December, and shall be laid before the Congress and duly considered thereat.

VII. It shall be the duty of all Standing Congress Committees, in consultation with their Sub-Committees, and as many of the leading men resident therein as may be possible, to divide their several jurisdictions into such electoral circles as may to them seem to be most likely in the existing state of the country, to secure a fair representation of the intelligent portion of the community, without distinction of creed, caste, race, or color. Such circles may be territorial, or where local circumstances require this, may each include one or more castes, or professions, or Associations, of any kind. Except in the case of Associations, all delegates shall be elected at public meetings, held for the purpose. In the case of Associations, delegates shall be elected at general meetings specially convened on that behalf.

VIII. Delegates may be of any creed, caste, or nationality, but must be residents in India, and not less than 25 years of age.

IX. It shall be the duty of all Standing Congress Committees to send out, 3 months before the date fixed for the Congress, special notices to each of their electoral divisions calling upon each to elect the number of delegates assigned under their scheme to such division, as also one or more provisional delegates, who will, in case of the death or inability to attend of any of the elected delegates, take the places of these without further election, and to forward to them—the Congress Committees—full list of such delegates with all particulars in the form given in Appendix II. It will be the duty of the Standing Congress Committees not only to issue such notices, but to see that they are acted upon, deputations from their number proceeding, where necessary, to the centres of the divisions. Provided that in case any electoral division fails to elect the required delegates, the Committee is empowered to cancel such division, and create in its place another division more ready to do its duty. Each Standing Congress Committee shall forward a complete list (in the form given in Appendix III) of all delegates and provisional delegates elected for their entire jurisdiction to the Reception Committee, so that the same may reach the latter on or before the 15th of December, and it shall be the duty of the Reception Committee to remind the Standing Committees that these are due, and failing to receive these lists, to telegraph for them persistently, and to bring to the notice of the Congress any serious neglect of this rule.

X. It shall be the duty of each Standing Congress Committee, at least one month before the date fixed for the Congress, to ascertain the cheapest and best routes and modes of conveyance by which the several delegates of their jurisdiction can reach the Congress, the time that will be occupied in transit, and the cost of the journey by both 1st and 2nd class, single and return, and to notify the same to each of the delegates and provisional delegates elected within their jurisdiction.

XI. It shall be the duty of each Standing Congress Committee to notify, so that such notification shall reach the Reception Committee on or before the 1st of November, the subjects that the people of their several jurisdictions desire to see discussed. Provided that such subjects

shall be of a national character, that is to say, of a nature affecting the whole country, and not provincial, and that in regard to each subject the exact resolution which it is desired to pass be also transmitted, along with, whenever the latter is practicable, the names of the gentlemen who are prepared to propose or support such resolutions.

XII. The Standing Congress Committee of the jurisdiction in which the Congress is to be held shall, not less than six months before the date fixed for the Congress, associate with itself all the leading inhabitants of the place where the Congress is to be held, who may be willing to take a part in the proceedings, and with them constitute itself a Reception Committee.

XIII. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee (A) to notify to all the Standing Committees their appointment, and to invite them to proceed to call for delegates, and to send in before the appointed date the list of the subjects which the people of their jurisdiction desire should be discussed as required by Rule XI; (B) to collect and provide the funds necessary for the entertainment of the delegates and other purposes essential to the holding of the Congress; to arrange for a suitable meeting hall; for the suitable lodgment of the delegates of other jurisdictions; for the food of the delegates during their stay, due regard being had to the customs, local or religious, of each, and generally to arrange for everything necessary for their convenience and comfort; and (C) to maintain a constant correspondence with all the Standing Congress Committees, and generally, so far as may be, assure themselves that the necessary work is duly proceeding in all jurisdictions.

XIV. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee to obtain from the several Standing Committees the list of subjects referred to in Rule XI, reminding them and giving them ample warning that lists not received by the 1st of November cannot be attended to and on that date to proceed to consider such lists, and after eliminating all subjects (if there be any such) of a clearly provincial character, or unsupported by definite resolutions intended to be proposed in regard to them, to compile the rest into one list in the form given in Appendix IV, and print and despatch the same by the 15th of November, in sufficient numbers, to the several Standing Committees to enable these to distribute copies to each delegate and provisional delegate, and the several Standing Committees shall be responsible for their immediate distribution accordingly.

XV. It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee, as soon as possible after its constitution, to select and communicate to the several Standing Congress Committees the names of those gentlemen whom it considers eligible for the office of President, and in correspondence with them to settle who shall be invited to fill that office, and thereafter when an agreement thereon has been come to, to communicate with the gentleman finally approved by all, or a considerable majority of the Standing Committees, and generally to do all that may be necessary to settle the question of the Presidentship at least one month before the Congress meets.

XVI. Of the subjects circulated under Rule XIV, for information, only those shall be brought forward and discussed at the Congress which shall be finally approved by a Committee (to be called the Subject Committee) consisting of the President-elect and one or more representatives of each jurisdiction, (selected by all delegates who may be then present at the Congress station), which shall meet on the day previous to the inaugural sitting of the Congress. Provided also that this Committee shall be empowered to add any subjects to those included in this list that may for any reasons appear to them specially deserving of discussion, framing at the same time the resolutions that they desire to see proposed in regard to them and further, to modify as may appear to them necessary, any of the resolutions propounded in regard to the subjects included in the list which they have accepted for discussion. Provided further, that the Committee shall at the same

time settle, so far as may be possible, those gentlemen who are to be invited to propose, second, and support the resolutions, and shall put themselves into communication with them, and that they shall at once frame a list of the approved subjects and resolutions in the form given in Appendix V, and shall print the same so that a copy may, if possible, be placed in the hands of each delegate at the inaugural sitting of the Congress.

XVII. It shall be the duty of the Chairman of the Reception Committee to preside at the commencement of the inaugural sitting of the Congress, and after delivering such address as he and the Reception Committee may consider necessary to call upon the assembled delegates to elect a President, and after such election to install the said President in the chair of office.

XVIII. From and after the installation of the President, he shall direct and guide the entire proceedings of the assembly, he being empowered in all cases, except as hereinafter provided, in which differences of opinion arise, or doubts occur, either himself to rule what course should be taken when his ruling shall be final, or to take a vote from the assembly, when the decision of the majority shall be final.

XIX. Until the subjects and resolutions approved by the Subject Committee have been discussed (and this in such order as the President may direct) and disposed of by the adoption, rejection or modification of such Resolutions, no other business shall be brought before he Congress. But after this, if there be time for this, any delegate who shall have given notice in writing at the commencement of the sitting to the President of his desire to have a particular subject discussed and a definite Resolution, which he sets forth, proposed, shall have a *right* and a delegate who at *any* time previous to rising shall have given such notice, *may* with the permission of the President, rise and ask the President to take the sense of the assembly as to whether such subject shall be discussed. No speaking at this stage shall be allowed. The President shall simply read out the subject and the proposed resolution, and make any such remarks as he considers essential, and take a vote of the assembly as to whether the subject shall or shall not be discussed. If the vote is in the affirmative, the proposer shall then set forth the subject and the resolution he therein proposes with such explanations as he considers necessary, and then, after due discussion, the question shall be disposed of in the usual way. If the vote is in the negative, the subject shall be at once dropped.

XX. The Reception Committee shall be responsible for the due reporting of the proceedings, for the compilation under their guidance by the General Secretary of the Report of the Congress, and for the printing, publication and distribution of the Report in India and in England.

For the Committee,

A. O. Hume,
General Secretary.

List of Existing Standing Congress Committees:-

1. THE CALCUTTA COMMITTEE (For Lower Bengal, Assam, and Orissa)
2. THE BANKIPORE COMMITTEE (For Behar)
3. THE BENARES COMMITTEE (For the Benares Division)
4. THE ALLAHABAD COMMITTEE (For the Doab and Bundelkhund)
5. THE LUCKNOW COMMITTEE (For Oudh and Rohilkhund)
6. THE LAHORE COMMITTEE (For the Punjab)

7. THE KURRACHI COMMITTEE (For Sindh)
8. THE SURAT COMMITTEE (For Guzerat)
9. THE BOMBAY COMMITTEE (For the Concan)
10. THE POONA COMMITTEE (For the Deccan, Khandeish and Berar)
11. THE NAGPORE COMMITTEE (For the Central Provinces)
12. THE MADRAS COMMITTEE (For the Madras Presidency)

Source: *Indian Mirror,* 21 January 1888; *Mahratta,* 15 January 1888.

ADDENDA

Addendum to Rule XII.

It is to be distinctly understood that the Reception Committee cannot provide accommodation or food for any one but delegates and at most for one servant each for any delegates who absolutely require such attendance. All delegates who *can* do without a special servant of their own should do so, the Reception Committee will provide attendance for their guests. If any delegate desires to bring with him friends or family or more than one servant he must notify the same at least 20 days before the Congress meets to the Reception Committee, stating the number of persons he intends to bring, the number of rooms or the kind of house he requires and the amount he is willing to pay for the same, and the Committee will endeavour to have the required accommodation ready. Unless such timely notice be given, the Committee, though they will still try to assist their guest's friends, can take no responsibility in regard to them. Under no circumstances can any one not a delegate, or the one servant of a delegate, be accommodated in any of the quarters provided by the Reception Committee for the delegates.

Rule XVI.—(Revised).

Of the subjects circulated under Rule XIV for information, only those shall be brought forward and discussed at the Congress which shall be finally approved by a Committee (hereinafter designated the Subject Committee) consisting of the President-Elect, the General Secretary and one or more of the representatives of each jurisdiction which shall meet as early as possible on the day previous to the inaugural sitting of the Congress and with necessary intervals for food and rest continue sitting until the work is completed. It shall be the duty of each Standing Congress Committee to select specially and arrange for the despatch of one or more of its delegates, so that he or they may arrive in good time for and represent their views at the Subject Committee which besides these specially selected delegates may include a limited number of gentlemen selected by the other delegates present at the time, should the President-Elect consider this necessary to ensure an adequate representation of all sections of the community. It shall not be open to any delegate or body of delegates or any Standing Congress Committee, not present or represented at the opening of the Subject Committee to question, later on, its proceedings or demand that the work of selecting subjects be done over again, but it will be open to any and all who may be dissatisfied with the programme of the Committee to propose amendments to any or all the resolutions they have approved, or when all the subjects approved by them have been disposed of, to move for the discussion of other subjects, as provided in other rules. The Subject Committee is empowered to add any subjects to those included in the list circulated under Rule XIV that may for any reasons appear to them specially deserving of discussion, framing at the

same time the resolutions that they desire to see proposed in regard to them, and further, to modify as may appear to them necessary, any of the resolutions propounded in regard to the subjects included in the list, which they have accepted for discussion. The Committee shall at the same time scttle, so far as may be possible, those gentlemen who are to be invited to propose, second, and support the resolutions, and shall put themselves into communication with them, and they shall, before separating, frame a list of the approved subjects and resolutions in the form given in Appcndix V, and shall print the samc so that a copy may, if possible, be placed in the hands of each delegate at the inaugural sitting of the Congress.

RULE XVIII.—A

It is desirable that the President should have, sitting with him on the platform, and constituting, a sort of Council, that he can consult in case of necessity, one or more of the leading delegates from each jurisdiction. There are places on the platform according to the standard plan, for 22 such Councillors, and these shall be apportioned as follows to the jurisdictions of the several Standing Congress Committees, *viz.,* to that of Calcutta 4, of Bankipore 1, of Benares and Allahabad taken together 2, of Lucknow 2, of Lahore 2, of Karachi 1, of Surat 1, of Bombay 3, of Poona 1, of Nagpore 1, of Madras 4. The delegates of each jurisdiction present on the morning of the inaugural sitting, must elect these their representatives and notify their names before noon on the day of such sitting to the secretary of the Reception Committee. The Chairman of the Reception Committee and a special Secretary, to be selected by the President, will also occupy the platform on the immediate right and left of the President.

RULE XVIII.—B

On or before noon of the day of the inaugural sitting, the President-Elect, in consultation with the Chairman of the Reception Committee, shall nominate 8 or more gentlemen not themselves delegates, as wardens of the assembly and shall invest them with a conspicuous badge and a wand of office. It shall be the duty of these wardens throughout the Congress to see that the delegates take the places assigned to them; that the pathways are kept clear, the arrangements of the Reception Committee rigidly respected and generally order maintained in all particulars. It shall be the duty of all delegates to comply at once and unhesitatingly with any requests made to them by the wardens.

RULE XVIII.—C

No one, not a delegate, shall be allowed to address the Congress or vote on any matter before it. No delegate shall be allowed to address the assembly except from the platform. The Subjcct Committee will usually have arranged for proposers, seconders, and supporters, and at times for other speakers on each resolution, and these will, when no amendment is proposed, have precedence of other persons who desire to speak, but after these have spoken, these others shall be called on to speak in the order in which they may have submitted their names (very clearly written in full, in ink) to thc President. Provided that when it seems clear that the Congress is of one mind on any subject and does not desire further speaking, the President may, at the close of any speaker's address, take the sense of the assembly as to whether further discussion is necessary and proceed accordingly. When one or more amendments have been duly notified, then after the proposer and seconder of the original resolutions have spoken, the proposers and seconders of the amendments shall be called on in the order in which the amendments were filed, and after this the supporters of the original resolution and the amendments shall speak in turn, and after these, again, all other speakers in the order in which their names have been registered.

No original proposer of a resolution shall, without the express permission of the President previously obtained, speak for more than 15 minutes. No other speaker shall, without the express permission of the same officer previously obtained, speak for more than 10 minutes and, as a rule, speakers are expected to confine themselves to five minutes. The President will touch a gong once to warn each speaker when the time allotted to him is drawing to a close, and he will touch it a second time when that period has elapsed and he considers that the speaker should cease speaking, and when the President does thus a second time touch his gong, the speaker shall thereupon, then and there close his address and leave the platform unless called upon by the assembly generally to proceed. Each speaker on ascending the platform for the purpose of speaking shall give one card on which his name is very clearly written in full in English, as also the name of the jurisdiction to which he belongs, to the Shorthand Reporter employed by the Congress and a similar card to the President's Secretary, and the latter shall read it out distinctly to the assembly before the speech commences.

RULE XVIII.—D

When considerable difference of opinion is proved, by the course of the discussion, to exist in the assembly in regard to any question before it, the President may, at any time, temporarily suspend business and inviting to the platform such other delegates as he considers necessary, with these and his Councillors, as a Special Committee, proceed to endeavour to work out a solution of the difficulty which will commend itself to all parties, or to the great majority of these. Should this prove impracticable he will resume business and take the sense of the assembly as to whether further discussion shall be allowed or the several amendments (the last, first, and so on) put in the usual way. But should, as will generally be the case, a compromise be arrived at by the Special Committee, unanimously or by majority of at least two-thirds he shall on resuming the chair, first read out the resolution thus arrived at and then either himself explain its bearings on the matters in dispute, or call upon some one else to do so, and after such explanation put this at once to the assembly. If it be not carried, he will proceed as above directed, but if carried, the discussion will he considered closed and the assembly will proceed to the next subject and resolution on the programme. Such resolutions will appear in the summary, as "Proposed by a Special Committee and carried by a majority, unanimously, or, by acclamation"—as the case may be.

RULE XIX.—A

Without the special permission of the President, which shall only be granted when this appears to him essentially necessary, no amendment shall be proposed, of which due notice in writing signed by at least five delegates shall not have been given to the President at the time of his taking the chair or before business commences, on the day on which the resolution which it is proposed to amend is discussed. The notice shall set forth the resolution, to which it is proposed to move an amendment, the exact words of the amendment, and the whole resolution as it would stand were the amendment carried. In introducing each resolution for discussion the President shall mention fully each amendment thereon of which he has received notice, so that all delegates may clearly realise the points which are to be in debate, and all including the proposers, etc., of the original resolution frame their speeches accordingly.

RULE XIX.—B

To allow for the presentation of notices of amendment and the like, including general protests by all the Hindu, or Mahomedan delegates as a body against the proposing of any particular resolution, the President shall always take his seat one half hour before business commences.

RULE XIX.—C

The President may at any time during a debate himself explain or call upon the proposer, or any other delegate, to explain more fully the whole or any portion of an original resolution, which appears to him to be being misunderstood by the speakers or the assembly.

RULE XIX.—D

It may sometimes occur that in the hurry and heat of debates where but little time can be conceded to each subject, (especially where amendments on amendments are admitted by the President) that the resolutions actually passed by Congress, though perfectly clear and intelligible, are yet needlessly involved, tautological, or otherwise verbally defective. It shall, therefore, be the duty of the President, in consultation with the General Secretary, if possible, day by day, otherwise at any rate immediately at the close of the session, to review most carefully each of the resolutions and while preserving intact their meaning, to correct so far as may appear to him really necessary, all literary and verbal oversights, retaining in all cases so much of the exact original wording as may be possible, consistent with the proper discharge of the duty above imposed upon him.

SUGGESTIONS* FOR THE STANDING CONGRESS COMMITTEE

(1) The Standing Congress Committee must, under the Tentative Rules, consist in the first instance of all those delegates who attended the last Congress, and these should associate with themselves all those gentlemen who attended as delegates at any previous Congress and all other leading members of the circle who sympathize in the movement. Of course the large body thus formed cannot be expected to work at details. The majority of the members have not the time to attend to a huge series of these. If any matter of great importance arises, they must of course assist with advice, and if required money also, but the regular routine work, of which there will necessarily be a good deal, must be done by a small number of real workers whom the Committee must appoint: men whose circumstances permit to give a fair share of time and attention to the work, and who are so really and earnestly interested in this that they will not grudge either.

(2) The first point, then, for every Standing Congress Committee, as soon as it is constituted, is to appoint a secretary or secretaries and a *small,* strong, Executive Committee—all of them men of the class just referred to—with instructions to hold a meeting *without fail,* once *every* week, on a fixed *day,* at a fixed *hour,* at a fixed *place,* two to form a quorum. All work pertaining to the Standing Congress Committee to be disposed of by these weekly meetings, by such members of the Executive Committee as are present. No one should afterwards be competent to question such decisions on the score, that only 2 or 3 were present; if more were not present, that is their own fault, and all must cheerfully accept, and be bound by the decision of those who did take trouble to be present.

(3) The most important work of the Executive Committee is to create (if this has not already been done) and consolidate the electoral division. The electoral divisions must be so arranged as to cover every portion of the circle** and include every section of the community. One main object in elaborating them is to ensure that delegates shall fairly represent every creed, class, race, and

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*These suggestions are the result of the practical experience gained in working out the electoral system in Madras and must of course be only taken *quantum valeat* and open to such modifications as each Standing Committee finds necessary or expedient.

**The circle is that tract of country over which the Standing Congress Committee has jurisdiction.

section of the community inhabiting the circle. This can only be achieved in most circles by constituting electoral divisions of two classes, *viz.,* first, territorial, each to include, (*a*) a portion of a city, or (*b*) a whole city or town (*c*) with a portion of district adjacent to it, or (*d*) a town with the entire district to which it pertains, or (*e*) in very backward portions of the country, a town together with 2 or more neighbouring districts, and, second, sectional, each to include a special community or an association, or groups of either of these. A glance at the Appendix will show how this has been managed at Madras, it being noted that the divisions printed in Italics, though duly constituted, have not yet agreed to act, but letters have been addressed to them which, with such replies as they may elicit, will later be published.

Of course the divisions must, as a rule, be worked out in consultation with leaders in each, and these must be constituted Sub-Committees. The very essence of the scheme is that there should be a *working* local Sub-Committee in and directly responsible for each division—whether Territorial or Sectional, and as the divisions are created so must these Sub-Committees be created.

In constituting divisions, regard must be had to the men available for Sub-Committees. The smaller and more manageable the divisions, the better no doubt—but then it is no use constituting a division unless you have in it men who will form a Sub-Committee and *work* the division. Very often, therefore, divisions will have to consist of entire districts at the headquarters of which alone can men of the requisite education and public spirit be found.

The divisions settled, the numbers of delegates that each should return as a minimum (which each is absolutely pledged to send, no matter how far off the Congress be held,) should be fixed by dividing the total number for the circle (at 3 per million for the total population thereof) over the several divisions with due advertence to their relative importance and the advance that they have made in political and general education and then adding thereto as will be necessary in all metropolitan circles at any rate, such additional delegates as may be essential to secure a really comprehensive representation of all the interests embraced in the circle.

It may be that some of the divisions such, for instance, as the European Chambers of Commerce, the Jewish Community in Bombay, the Armenian Community in Calcutta, the European Planters in Assam, Sylhet and Cachar—the Universities (which are to a great extent official, the fellows being nominated by Government, and not elected by the graduates as they should be), etc., may decline to co-operate and act, but they must be none the less invited and pressed to do this and constitute divisions. Only, in the schedule, those declining to act must be printed in Italics.

The schedule thus prepared should have the formal assent of the entire Standing Congress Committee, or if every member cannot, as often happens, be got hold of, of a large majority thereof—a copy of it should then be sent to the General Secretary. This schedule will represent what the circle is pledged to; it will be open to the circle, until at any rate the entire Congress rule otherwise hereafter, to send as many *more* delegates on any occasion as it finds necessary or desirable.

The schedule thus worked out, the Executive Committee next have to bring home to each Sub-Committee* its responsibility for its division making it clear to them that there are two main branches of their responsibility—(a) in regard to delegates, (b) in regard to the education of the people.

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*Each Sub-Committee can add to its numbers such leading residents of its division as are willing to co-operate heartily in the work, and each must appoint a Secretary for correspondence with the Executive Committee.

As to (a), they are answerable for causing the selection, not in a hurry at the last moment, but, during the year, after consultation with all the most influential and intelligent of the inhabitants of their division, of really suitable delegates to attend the Congress. They must in this selection weigh all matters; they must look to position, influence, intelligence, education and unblemished character. They must try and have all combined; but if this be not possible, they must remember that the last is the most important, the last but one the next most important, and so on. They must, of course, arrange either that the delegates selected are well able to bear the expense of the journey, etc., or that the necessary funds for the purpose are duly collected in the division.

So far as may be possible all persons selected as delegates should understand English sufficiently well to be able to take an intelligent part in the proceedings of the Congress, without the need of any one to explain or interpret to them.

Besides the 1, 2, or 3 delegates that they are required to send up from their division by the electoral scheme, the Sub-Committees should also always select one or more extra or provisional delegates who, in case of death, sickness, or other restraining cause, preventing the attendance of any delegate, may be prepared at once, without further action, to take the defaulter's place.

Of course, in all places where there are a good number of Mahomedans, they should endeavour to have at least one delegate a Mahomedan.

As to (b) they should charge themselves with the political education of all the respectable inhabitants of their division. They need not, at present, trouble themselves with the quite ignorant low caste people, labourers, and the like, who have virtually no stake in the country, and no sufficiently developed intelligence to be as yet associated in the work; but all respectable ryots, petty shopkeepers, artizans, as well as the higher classes, should be made to understand something of their rights and duties as good citizens—something of the leading political questions of the day—something of the support that in their own interest they are bound to accord to those who are endeavouring to secure for their fellow-countrymen and themselves, rights, privileges and power, that will enable them to do away with many of the chief grievances of which the country now justly complains.

Now they can do this partly by the wide circulation of elementary tracts, and partly by going round their divisions and lecturing from place to place on these matters.

As to tracts, the Congress Catechism, in simple language, in all the vernaculars of the circle, will be provided for them by the Executive Committee, but they will have to realise and pay to this Committee the 10 or 20 Rs. that the 1,000 to 2,000 copies that they will need for their divisions will cost. As to lecturing they must enlist in the work every competent man within their divisions and arrange amongst themselves, so that at least every town and village that contains 500 inhabitants and upwards, is visited and lectured in by *some one* not less than once a year.

These are the principal duties of the Sub-Committees but besides this they must keep themselves in communication with the Executive Committee, and carefully carry out all subsidiary instructions that they receive from them.

(4) The Executive Committee should arrange for holding a Conference at some suitable central locality of all the Sub-Committees and take care that these are all made to understand and realise thoroughly their duties and their responsibility to their country and countrymen for the due performance of these.

(5) The Executive Committee must *at once* arrange for the translation of the catechism into all the vernaculars of its circle, taking care that the language is simple, and adapted to the comprehension of the ordinary ryot, and adding in the last two replies, all such local matter as they

consider necessary for the guidance of their people. They must get these clearly printed, and as cheaply as possible (the cost ought not to exceed Rs. 10 per 1,000, and they must then insist on the Sub-Committees speedily providing the funds for the number of copies requisite for their several divisions, which will range from one to two thousand, probably according to number and degree of advancement of their people.

(6) Each member of each Standing Committee must contribute a small sum of Rs. 5 or 10 each, as may be settled locally, to the Executive Committee to put them in funds for printing these catechism and other papers, and where copies are obtained from other Executive Committees, paying for these. But as explained, the major portion of this will be recovered from the Sub-Committees, so that it will not often be necessary to apply to the Standing Congress [Committee], and it is believed that no member of this will grudge this small donation once in a way.

(7) The Executive Committee should draw up a regular scheme so as to ensure every single electoral division being visited, at least once in every twelve months, by a competent member of its own body or of the General Standing Committee, who should deliver one or more lectures at its headquarters, and satisfy himself that the Sub-Committees are really doing their duty or if not, put them in the right way. If there be any difficulty in getting members, each to attend to, say one division once in the year, it will be a matter for deep regret. Every true-born son of India ought to be proud of the opportunity of thus promoting the enlightenment of his fellow-countrymen, and strengthening his country's cause, even at some minute sacrifice of time, comfort and convenience, such as the required work entails.

(8) Further the Executive Committee, in consultation from time to time with the members of the Standing Committee, must thoroughly mature a scheme for raising, when the time comes to make a call for this, a Permanent Congress Fund, at a rate of not less than Rs. 3,000 or more than Rs. 5,000 per million of population.

(9) It will be observed, that, realising the fact that the Standing Congress Committees will, in many places, mainly consist of leading public men already fully occupied, these suggestions contemplate relieving them of all detail work, and of all compulsory attendance (though each and all *when able to do so,* can attend and take part in the regular fixed weekly meetings of the Executive Committee) at ordinary meetings. But it is expected of them that they shall, once in a way, when they can afford the leisure, satisfy themselves that the Executive Committee are really carrying out the work efficiently—that they shall individually be at all times ready to afford to the Secretary, or the members of the Executive Committee, advice on any special point, or the support of their influence in any special matter—and that they shall at the outset make a small donation to place the Executive Committee in funds for their printing works.

In the case of any really important matters having to be decided, a general meeting of the Standing Congress Committee will be called by the Executive Committee after personal enquiries from as many of the members as possible, so as to ensure the fixing of the most generally convenient date and hour. One such meeting will certainly be required some time before the next Congress takes place and possibly, one or two others, but the Standing Committee will be troubled as little as possible, only in fact when it is really necessary and when consequently none of them will grudge either the time or the trouble.

If at any time any 3 of the members of the Standing Committee consider, for any reason, that a general meeting should be called, they will notify the same to the Executive Committee, explaining their reason for the same in writing, and the Committee will arrange accordingly.

On the 1st of May, and each succeeding month, the Executive Committee will report progress, succinctly circulating the report, which should be informal, confidential and as brief as possible, to each member of the Standing Congress Committee, who shall be answerable for reading and *promptly* sending it on.

It is very desirable that a copy of this Report should be simultaneously sent to the General Secretary for record and for the information, where necessary, of other circles.

Source: A.C. Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution* (Madras, 1917), Appendix A, pp. xxii-xxxi.

Appendix C

TENTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1894. RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

No one who is not a Delegate will be allowed to address the Congress or vote on any matter.

Every Delegate must address the assembly from the speaker's platform.

The proposers, seconders, and supporters of each resolution will be selected by the Subjects Committee.

The President will allot the time during which each speaker can speak, and no one should exceed this without the special permission of the President. The President will sound his gong once to warn each speaker when the time allotted to him is drawing to a close; he will sound it a second time when that period has elapsed; and should he consider that the speaker ought to cease speaking, the President will touch the gong again when the speaker must, there and then, close his address.

Any Delegate not selected but who may wish to speak on any resolution should send in his name and that of the Congress Circle to which he belongs, legibly written on a piece of paper, to the President, and may speak when called upon by the President to do so.

Any one wishing to propose any amendment to any resolution must send to the President a slip of paper containing the amendment, his own name and that of his seconder, as also the names of the Congress Circles to which they respectively belong; a similar slip should be handed to the Reporter.

Any one who wishes to propose a new subject for discussion by the Congress must give previous notice of it in writing to the President at the commencement of the sitting, with a copy of any resolution he wishes to propose, his own name, and the name of the Congress Circle he belongs to.

No other business shall be brought forward before the Congress until the subjects and resolutions approved by the Subjects Committee have been disposed of.

But afterwards, if time permits, any Delegate who shall have given notice in writing, at the commencement of the sitting, to the President of his desire to have a particular subject discussed, or a definite resolution, which he sets forth, proposed, shall have a right to move, but any Delegate who at any time previous to rising shall have given the necessary notice may, with the permission of the President, rise and ask the President to take the sense of the assembly as to whether such subject shall be discussed. No speaking at this stage shall be allowed. The President will simply read out the subject and the proposed resolution and make any such remarks as he considers essential and take a vote of the assembly as to whether the subject shall or shall not be discussed. If the vote is in the affirmative the proposer shall then set forth the subject and the resolution he

proposes with such explanations as he considers necessary, and then after due discussion the question shall be disposed of in the usual way. If the vote is in the negative, the subject shall be at once dropped.

Source: *Report of the Tenth Indian National Congress Held at Madras, on the 27th, 28th, and 29th December, 1894*, pp. 29-30.

Appendix D

ELEVENTH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1895. RULES FOR THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

1. On any point of order, the decision of the President shall be final and no discussion shall be allowed thereupon.
2. No one who is not a Delegate will be allowed to address the Congress or vote on any matter.
3. Every Delegate must address the assembly from the speaker's platform.
4. The proposers, seconders and supporters of each resolution will be selected by the Subjects Committee.
5. The President will allot the time during which each speaker can speak, and no one should exceed this without the special permission of the President. The President will sound his gong once to warn each speaker when the time allotted to him is drawing to a close, and he will sound it a second time when that period has elapsed; and should he consider that the speaker ought to cease speaking, the President will touch the gong again, when the speaker must, there and then, close his address.
6. Any Delegate, not selected but who may wish to speak on any resolution, should send in his name and that of the Congress Circle to which he belongs, legibly written on a piece of paper, to the President, and may speak when called upon by the President to do so.
7. Any one wishing to propose any amendment to any resolution must send to the President a slip of paper containing the amendment, his own name and that of his seconder, as also the names of the Congress Circles, to which they respectively belong; a similar slip should be handed to the Reporter.
8. Any one who wishes to propose a new subject for discussion by the Congress must give previous notice of it in writing to the President at the commencement of the sitting, with a copy of any resolution he wishes to propose, his own name, and the name of the Congress Circle he belongs to.
9. No other business shall be brought forward before the Congress until the subjects and resolutions approved by the Subjects Committee have been disposed of.
10. But afterwards, if time permits, any Delegate, who shall have given notice in writing at the commencement of the sitting to the President of his desire to have a particular subject discussed, or a definite resolution, which he sets forth, proposed, shall have a right to do so, and a Delegate who at any time previous to rising shall have given such notice may, with the permission of the President, rise and ask the President to take the sense of the assembly as to whether such a subject will be discussed. No speaking at this stage shall be allowed.

The President will simply read out the subject and the proposed resolution and make any such remarks as he considers essential and take a vote of the assembly as to whether the subject shall or shall not be discussed. If the vote is in the affirmative, the proposer will then set forth the subject and the resolution he therein proposes with such explanations as he considers necessary, and then, after due discussion, the question will be disposed of in the usual way. If the vote is in the negative, the subject shall be at once dropped.

Source: *Report of the Eleventh Indian National Congress, Held at Poona, on the 27th, 28th, and 29th December, 1895,* pp. 57-8.

Appendix E

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS. DRAFT RULES IN REGARD TO ITS CONSTITUTION AND WORKING, 1895

The following Draft Rules in regard to the constitution and working of the Indian National Congress have been framed by the Poona Congress Committee:

I

The objects of the Indian National Congress are (1) to promote the political education of the people in all parts of India, directly or indirectly subject to the supremacy of British rule; (2) to foster in all the sense of national unity and loyalty to the connection of India with the British Empire; (3) to give free expression to the views of all classes and sections of the people, in regard to the great administrative and legislative measures of the Government of India, and of its general policy in regard to all public matters, in a constitutional and deliberate manner from the non-official point of view; (4) to bring about a reform of the Indian administration, both in England and in India, by memorials addressed to the Government of India, and the Parliament of England, and by deputations sent to enlighten English public opinion on Indian subjects by agitation in the press and on public platforms; (5) to support the work of the Indian Parliamentary Committee, and to enlist the co-operation of the British press and people; (6) to keep an agency in England, to be called the "British Indian Congress Committee," and to help it with money, and to supply it with information in regard to Indian matters.

II

The Congress is not a league for the promotion of any particular reform, but is intended to be a National Council, charged with the function of supplying the want of popular legislative and executive chambers in the machinery of the Indian administration, and its functions in relation to the government of India are those of the Opposition to the party in power under a Parliamentary system of Government. Until otherwise notified, there shall be for the present a meeting of the National Congress each year.

The Congress meeting shall consist of delegates from all parts of India, elected in the manner stated below, and shall take place at such place and time as may be resolved on at the last preceding Congress. The Standing Congress Committees of the Presidency, in which the Congress is to meet, shall, however, have the power to change the place of the meeting and duly notify the fact. Besides the annual meeting provided for above, it shall be within the power of the Standing Committees in the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Bombay, Allahabad, Lahore, Madras, and Nagpore, to invite a special meeting of the Congress on emergent occasions after consulting the

Standing Congress Committees in their respective provinces. There shall be a General Secretary appointed each year at the Congress meeting who will hold the office for one year, and the Secretaries of the Standing Congress Committees in the Presidency towns shall be Joint Secretaries for each Presidency.

III

STANDING CONGRESS COMMITTEES

For the purpose of carrying on the work of political education all the year round and of facilitating the election of members for the annual gathering, there shall be Standing Congress Committees at all the important centres. There shall be at least one Standing Congress Committee for each great revenue division in British India and one in the capital of each province. There may be separate committees for each district, included in such divisions or for smaller areas according to circumstances. For the present these committees are, as stated in Appendix A; but the Congress shall have the power to increase or diminish their number or alter their jurisdiction.

The delegates from each jurisdiction, who may have attended one or more sittings of the Congress within three previous years, shall constitute the Standing Congress Committee for that jurisdiction. They shall have power to add to their own number from among such other persons as contribute to Congress funds a sum of not less that ten rupees per year, and they will appoint their own executive or working committee.

IV

It shall be the primary duty of all Standing Congress Committees, to promote the political education of the people of their several jurisdictions throughout the year, and to endeavour by the circulation of brief and simple tracts and catechisms written in the vernacular of that people, by the holding of public meetings at important centres, and by sending competent men round to lecture and explain the bearings of important subjects, and by all other constitutional means, to imbue the intelligent and respectable classes everywhere with a healthy sense of their duties and rights as good citizens. Care has to be especially taken to impress the people, first, with a conviction of the immense benefits that the country has derived from British rule and of the sincere desire that pervades the British nation to do the very best they can for the people of India; secondly, with some idea of the more important shortcomings of that rule, due partly to the failure of the Indian people to make known in a definite and intelligible form their wants and wishes; and thirdly, with the knowledge that all defects in the existing form of the administration may surely, though perhaps slowly, be amended, if the people will only unite in loyal, temperate, and persistent demands for the redress of grievances through such persons as they may choose as exponents of their views.

V

To enable the several committees to carry out this great work successfully, they are empowered to create as many sub-committees (to each of whom a definite sphere of action shall be assigned) within their jurisdictions, as may be necessary and possible, and they are further empowered to associate themselves with any existing Associations and work with them and through their various branches as sub-committees.

VI

Each year, each Standing Congress Committee shall report fully the work that it has done

during the year, accompanying the same, as far as may be practicable, with English translations of all the tracts, leaflets, and the like, that it may have issued during the year; such reports shall be in English, and shall be so despatched as to reach the Secretary of the Reception Committee (Rule XII) on or before the 15th of December, and shall be laid before the Congress and duly considered thereat.

VII

It shall be the duty of all Standing Congress Committees, in consultation with their sub-committees, to divide their several jurisdictions into such electoral circles as may to them seem to be most likely, in the existing state of the country, to secure a fair representation of the intelligent portion of the community, without distinction of creed, caste, race, or colour. Such circles may be territorial. In that case they will coincide as far as possible with the existing district and taluka sub-divisions, or where local circumstances require this, they may each include one or more castes or professions or particular creeds or associations of any kind. It shall be the duty of the Standing Congress Committees and their sub-committees as described above, to see that the work of electing delegates for the National Congress is carried on according to fixed rules and in an open and constitutional manner.

VIII

The delegates for the National Congress shall be as far as possible elected within each local area by all persons who are above 21 years of age, and who pay either to Government or to municipal or local bodies by way of taxes or rates a sum of not less than Rs. 5 per year and the elections shall take place under rules similar to those which have been framed by government for the election of members to municipalities and local boards. The number of delegates may be so proportioned that the total number from the province where the Congress is to be held shall not exceed the total number which may be elected by all the other provinces. As far as practicable the number of delegates to be elected in each jurisdiction shall be in the proportion of not less than one per million in the provinces where the Congress does not meet, and not more than 10 per million in the province in which the Congress holds its sittings.

In regard to sub-divisions not based on the territorial principle, the number shall be in the proportion of one for every lakh of people, and in the case of Associations, the number will be one for each separate Association.

Delegates may be of any creed, caste, or nationality, but must be residents within their jurisdiction or at least within their Presidency, and not less than 21 years of age.

IX

It shall be the duty of all Standing Congress Committees to send out, three months before the date fixed for the Congress, special notices to each of the electoral divisions calling upon each to elect the number of delegates assigned under this scheme to such division as also some more provisional delegates who will, in case of the death or inability to attend of any of the elected delegates, take the places of these without further election, and to forward to them—the Congress Committees—a full list of such delegates with all particulars in this form given in Appendix II. It shall be the duty of the Standing Congress Committees not only to issue such notices, but to see that they are acted upon; deputations from their number proceeding, where necessary, to the centres of the divisions. Provided that in case any electoral division fails to elect the required delegates, the Committee is empowered to cancel such division and create in its place another

division more ready to do its duty. Each Standing Congress Committee shall forward a complete list (in the form given in Appendix III) of all delegates and provisional delegates elected for their entire jurisdiction to the Reception Committee so that the same may reach the latter on or before the 5th of December, and it shall be the duty of the Reception Committee to remind the Standing Committees that these are due and failing to receive these lists, to telegraph for them persistently and to bring to the notice of the Congress any serious neglect of this rule.

X

It shall be the duty of each Standing Congress Committee, at least one month before the date fixed for the Congress, to ascertain the cheapest and best routes and modes of conveyance by which the several delegates of their jurisdictions may reach the Congress, the time that will be occupied in transit, and the cost of the journey by 1st, 2nd and 3rd class, single and return, and to notify the same to each of the delegates and provisional delegates elected within their jurisdiction.

XI

It shall be the duty of each Standing Congress Committee to notify, so that such notification shall reach the Reception Committee on or before the 1st of November, the subjects that the people of their several jurisdictions desire to see discussed. Provided that such subjects shall be of a national character, that is to say, of a nature affecting the whole country, and not provincial, and that in regard to each subject the exact resolution which it is desired to pass be also transmitted along with, whenever the latter is practicable, the names of the gentlemen who are prepared to propose or support such resolutions being also mentioned.

XII

RECEPTION COMMITTEE

It shall be the duty of the Standing Congress Committee of the jurisdiction in which the Congress is to be held, to form, not less than three months before the date fixed for the Congress, a Reception Committee composed of leading men in the several circles in the Presidency or Province and of others whose co-operation may be desired in the interests of the Congress. The number of members on the Reception Committee to be assigned to each circle shall be fixed by the Standing Congress Committee of the place where the Congress is to meet, and after that the Standing Committee of each circle shall have the power to adopt such method as it deems desirable to make the nominations. Provided that in each circle not less than two-thirds of the members of the Reception Committee shall be present who have contributed a certain minimum sum towards the expenses of the year's Congress—this minimum amount being determined for each circle by the Standing Congress Committee of that circle.

XIII

It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee (a) to notify to all the Standing Congress Committees their important appointments, and to invite them to proceed to elect delegates and to send in before the appointed date the list of the subjects which the people of their jurisdiction desire to have discussed as required by Rule XI; (b) to collect and provide the funds necessary for the entertainment of the delegates and other purposes essential to the holding of the Congress; to arrange for a suitable Meeting Hall; for a suitable lodgment of the delegates of other jurisdictions; for the food of the delegates during their stay, due regard being had to the customs, local or religious, of each, and generally to arrange for everything necessary for their convenience and

comfort; and (c) to maintain a constant correspondence with all the Standing Congress Committees, and generally, so far as may be, assure themselves that the necessary work is duly proceeding in all jurisdictions.

It must be distinctly understood that the Reception Committee cannot provide accommodation or food for anyone but a delegate, and, at most, for one servant each for any delegates who absolutely require such attendance. All delegates who can do without a special servant of their own should do so, the Reception Committee providing attendance for their guests. If any delegate desires to bring with him friends or family or more than one servant, he must notify the same, at least 20 days before the Congress meets, to the Reception Committee, stating the number of persons he intends to bring, the number of rooms or the kind of house he requires and the amount he is willing to pay for the same, and the Committee will endeavour to have the required accommodation ready. Unless such timely notice be given, the Committee, though they will still try to assist their guests' friends, can take no responsibility in regard to them. Under no circumstances can anyone not a delegate, or the one servant of a delegate, be accommodated in any of the quarters provided by the Reception Committee for the delegates.

XIV

It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee to obtain from the several Standing Committees the list of subjects referred to in Clause XI, reminding them and giving them ample warning that lists not received by the 1st of November cannot be attended to, and on the 1st of November to proceed to consider such lists, and after eliminating all subjects (if there be any such) of a clearly provincial character, or unsupported by definite resolutions intended to be proposed in regard to them, to compile the rest into one list as in the form given in Appendix IV, and print and despatch the same, by the 15th November, in sufficient numbers, to the several Standing Committees to enable these to distribute copies to each delegate and provisional delegate, and the several Standing Committees shall be responsible for their immediate distribution accordingly.

XV

It shall be the duty of the Reception Committee, as soon as possible after its constitution, to select and communicate to the several Standing Congress Committees the names of those gentlemen whom they consider eligible for the office of President, and in correspondence with them to settle who shall be invited to fill that office, and thereafter when an agreement thereon has been come to, to communicate with the gentleman finally approved by all, or a considerable majority of the Standing Committees, and generally to do all that may be necessary to settle the question of the Presidentship at least one month before the Congress meets.

XVI

Of the subjects circulated under Rule XIV for information, only those shall be brought forward and discussed at the Congress which shall be finally approved of by a Committee (hereinafter designated the Subjects Committee) consisting of the President-elect, the General Secretary, and one or more of the representatives of each jurisdiction, which shall meet as early as possible on the day previous to the inaugural sitting of the Congress, and with necessary intervals for food and rest, continue sitting until the work is completed. It shall be the duty of each Standing Congress Committee to elect specially and arrange for the despatch of one or more of its delegates so that he or they may arrive in good time for and represent their views at the Subjects Committee, which, besides these specially selected delegates, may also include a limited number of gentlemen,

selected by the other delegates present at the time, should the President-elect consider this necessary to ensure an adequate representation of all sections of the community. It shall not be open to any delegate or body of delegates or any Standing Congress Committee, not present or represented at the opening of the Subjects Committee to question, later on, its proceedings or demand that the work of selecting subjects be done over again, but it will be open to any and all who may be dissatisfied with the programme of the Committee to propose amendments to any or all the resolutions it has approved, or when all the subjects approved by it have been disposed of, to move for the discussion of other subjects, as provided for in other rules. The Subjects Committee is empowered to add any subjects to those included in the list circulated under Rule XIV that may for any reasons appear to it specially deserving of discussion, framing at the same time the resolutions that it desires to see proposed in regard to them, and further, to modify, as may appear to it necessary, any of the resolutions propounded in regard to the subjects included in the list, which it has accepted for discussion. The Committee shall at the same time settle, so far as may be possible, those gentlemen who are to be invited to propose, second, and support the resolutions, and shall put itself into communication with them, and shall, before separating, frame a list of the approved subjects and resolutions in the form given in Appendix V, and shall print the same, so that a copy may, if possible, be placed in the hands of each delegate at the inaugural sitting of the Congress.

XVII

It shall be the duty of the Chairman of the Reception Committee to preside at the commencement of the inaugural sitting of the Congress; and after delivering such address as he and the Reception Committee may consider necessary, to call upon the assembled delegates to elect a President and after such election to install the said President in the chair of office.

XVIII

From and after the installation of the President, he shall direct and guide the entire proceedings of the assembly, he being empowered in all cases, except as hereinafter provided in which differences of opinion arise or doubts occur, either himself to rule what course should be taken, when his ruling shall be final, or to take a vote from the assembly, when the decision of the majority shall be final.

(a) It is desirable that the President should have, sitting with him on the platform, and constituting a sort of council that he can consult in case of necessity, one or more of the leading delegates from each jurisdiction. There are places on the platform according to the standard plan for 22 such Councillors, and these shall be apportioned as follows to the jurisdictions of the several Standing Congress Committees, viz., to that of Calcutta 4, of Bankipore 1, of Benares and Allahabad taken together 2, of Lucknow 2, of Lahore 2, of Kurrachee 1, of Surat and Ahmedabad 1, of Bombay 3, of Poona 1, of Nagpore 1, of Madras 4. The delegates of each jurisdiction, present on the morning of the inaugural sitting, must elect these their representatives and notify their names before noon on the day of such sitting to the Secretary of the Reception Committee. The Chairman of the Reception Committee and a special Secretary to be selected by the President will also have seats on the platform on the immediate right and left of the President.

(b) On or before noon of the day of the inaugural sitting, the President-elect, in consultation with the Chairman of the Reception Committee, shall nominate 8 or more gentlemen, not themselves delegates, as warders of the assembly and shall invest them with a conspicuous badge and a wand of office. It shall be the duty of these warders throughout the Congress to see that the

delegates take the place assigned to them; that the pathways are kept clear, the arrangements of the Reception Committee rigidly respected and generally order maintained in all particulars. It shall be the duty of all delegates to comply at once and unhesitatingly with any requests made to them by the warders.

(c) No one, not a delegate, shall be allowed to address the Congress or vote on any matter before it. No delegate shall be allowed to address the assembly except from the platform. The Subjects Committee will usually have arranged for proposers, seconders and supporters, of each resolution; and these will, when no amendment is proposed, have precedence of other persons who may desire to speak. After the proposers, seconders and supporters have spoken, these others shall be called on to speak in the order in which they may have submitted their names (very clearly written in full, in ink) to the President; provided that when it seems clear that the Congress is of one mind on any subject and does not desire further speaking, the President may, at the close of any speaker's address, take the sense of the assembly as to whether further discussion is necessary and proceed accordingly. When one or more amendments have been duly notified, the proposers and seconders of the amendments shall be called on in the order in which the amendments were filed, and after this the supporters of the original resolution and the amendments shall speak in turn, and after these again all other speakers in the order in which their names have been registered. No original proposer of a resolution shall, without the express permission of the President previously obtained, speak for more than 15 minutes. No other speaker shall, without the express permission of the same officer previously obtained, speak for more than 10 minutes, and, as a rule, speakers are expected to confine themselves to five minutes. The President will touch a gong once to warn each speaker when the time allotted to him is drawing to a close, and he will touch it a second time when that period has elapsed and he considers that the speaker should cease speaking, and when the President does thus a second time touch his gong, the speaker shall thereupon then and there close his address and leave the platform unless called upon by the assembly generally to proceed. Each speaker on ascending the platform for the purpose of speaking shall give one card on which his name is very clearly written in full in English, as also the name of the jurisdiction to which he belongs, to the shorthand reporter employed by the Congress, and a similar card to the President's Secretary, and the latter shall read it out distinctly to the assembly before the speech commences.

(d) When considerable difference of opinion is proved, by the course of the discussion, to exist in the assembly in regard to any question before it, the President may, at any time, temporarily suspend business, and, inviting to the platform such other delegates as he considers necessary, with these and his Councillors, as a Special Committee, proceed to endeavour to work out a solution of the difficulty which will commend itself to all parties, or to the great majority of these. Should this prove impracticable, he will resume business and take the sense of the assembly as to whether further discussion shall be allowed, or the several amendments (the last, first, and so on) put in the usual way. But should, as will generally be the case, a compromise be arrived at by the Special Committee, unanimously or by a majority of at least two-thirds, he shall, on resuming the chair, first read out the Resolution thus arrived at, and then either himself explain its bearings on the matters in dispute, or call upon some one else to do so, and after such explanation put this at once to the assembly. If it be not carried, he will proceed as above directed, but if carried, the discussion will be considered closed and the assembly will proceed to the next subject and resolutions will appear in the summary, as "Proposed by a Special Committee and carried by a majority unanimously, or, by acclamation"—as the case may be.

XIX

Until the subjects and resolutions approved by the Subjects Committee have been discussed (and this in such order as the President may direct) and disposed of by the adoption, rejection or modification of such resolutions, no other business shall be brought before the Congress. But after this, if there be time, any delegate, who shall have given notice in writing at the commencement of the sitting to the President, of his desire to have a particular subject discussed and a definite resolution, which he sets forth proposed, shall have a right, and a delegate who at any time previous to rising shall have given such notice, may with the permission of the President, rise, and ask the President to take the sense of the assembly as to whether such subject shall be discussed. No speaking at this stage shall be allowed. The President shall simply read out the subject and the proposed resolution and make such remarks as he considers essential, and take a vote of the assembly as to whether the subject shall or shall not be discussed. If the vote is in the affirmative, the proposer shall then set forth the subject, and the resolution he therein proposes with such explanations as he considers necessary, and then, after the discussion, the question shall be disposed of in the usual way. It the vote is in the negative, the subject shall be at once dropped.

(a) Without the special permission of the President, which shall only be granted when this appears to him essentially necessary, no amendment shall be proposed, of which due notice in writing signed by at least five delegates shall not have been given to the President at the time of his taking the chair, or before business commences, on the day on which the resolution which it is proposed to amend is discussed. The notice shall set forth the resolution, to which it is proposed to move an amendment, the exact words of the amendment, and the whole resolution as it would stand were the amendment carried. In introducing each resolution for discussion, the President shall mention fully each amendment thereon of which he has received notice, so that all delegates may clearly realize the points which are to be in debate, and all, including the proposers, &c., of the original resolution, frame their speeches accordingly,

(b) To allow for the presentation of notices of amendment and the like, including general protests by all the Hindu or Mahomedan delegates as a body against the proposing of any particular resolution, the President shall always take his seat half-an-hour before business commences.

(c) The President may any time during a debate himself explain, or call upon the proposer, or any other delegate, to explain more fully the whole or any portion of an original resolution, which appears to him to be likely to be misunderstood by the speakers or the assembly.

(d) It may sometimes occur that in the hurry and heat of the debate, whcre but little time can be allotted to each subject (specially where amendment on amendment is admitted by the President) that the resolutions actually passed by the Congrcss, though perfectly clear and intelligible, are yet needlessly involved, tautological or otherwise verbally defective. It shall, therefore, be the duty of the President, in consultation with the General Secretary, if possible, day by day, otherwise at any rate immediately at the close of the session, to review most carefully each of the resolutions, and while preserving intact their meaning, to correct so far as may appear to him really necessary, all literary and verbal oversights, retaining in all cases so much of the exact original wording as may be possible, consistent with the proper discharge of the duty above imposed upon him.

XX

BRITISH CONGRESS COMMITTEE

It shall be the duty of all Standing Congress Committees, to remit, as hitherto, every year a sum of Rs. 60,000 to the British Congress Committee, which is the agency in England of the Indian National Congress. The charge shall be rateably apportioned amongst all the Standing Congress Committees in proportion to their means, and the Congress shall, at each annual sitting, determine the contributions to be made by each Standing Congress Committee, and the sum so determined shall be remitted to the British Committee before April 30th of each year.

XXI

INDIA NEWSPAPER

In return for the contributions mentioned in the preceding section, the British Committee shall despatch to each Committee a fixed number of copies of the India newspaper published by the British Committee, in accordance with a scale which will be fixed each year in consultation with the British Committee at the meeting of the Congress before it disperses. Each Standing Committee will be expected to distribute the copies among its own members, and other well-wishers of the Congress, and be responsible for the punctual payment of the sum so fixed.

XXII

CONGRESS FUND

Arrangement shall be made each year by the Reception Committee of the province in which the Congress is held to save out of the funds realised by them, a sum of at least Rs. 5,000. These sums, together with other special contributions, shall form part of a permanent Congress fund which will be invested, in the names of the General Secretary and the Secretaries to the Standing Congress Committees in the presidency towns. This fund shall not be drawn upon for the current expenses of the Congress or the British Committee, but will be allowed to accumulate, with a view to provide therefrom a permanent home for the Congress in some central place, as may be determined hereafter.

XXIII

THE PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

It shall be the duty of the Standing Congress Committees in each province to hold from time to time provincial gatherings of their members and delegates for the discussion of local subjects and the reports of such conferences shall be submitted to the National Congress at its next annual sitting.

Source: *Statesman,* 27 December 1895.

Appendix F

CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1899

Resolution X

Resolved—That this Congress adopts the following Rules regarding the Constitution of the Congress:-

1.—The object of the Indian National Congress shall be to promote by constitutional means the interests and the well-being of the people of the Indian Empire.

2.—It shall ordinarily meet once a year at such time and in such place as shall have been resolved on by the last preceding Congress. Provided that the Indian Congress Committee, as hereinafter provided for, may in case of necessity, change the place or time of the meeting of the Congress; provided also that in case of emergency the Indian Congress Committee may convene an extraordinary session of the Congress at such time and place as may be determined by them.

3.—It shall consist of delegates elected by political associations or other bodies, and by public meetings.

4.—Its affairs shall be managed by a Committee, styled the Indian Congress Committee, consisting of 45 members elected by the Congress, 40 of whom shall be elected upon the recommendations of the different Provincial Congress Committees, and, in the absence of such Committees, by the delegates of the respective Provinces in Congress assembled, in the manner hereinbelow laid down, that is to say:-

For Bengal including Assam	8
For Bombay including Sind	8
For Madras including Secunderabad	8
For North-Western Provinces including Oudh	6
For Punjab	4
For Berar	3
For Central Provinces	3

The term of office of the members of the Committee shall be the period intervening between two ordinary meetings of the Congress.

5.—The Indian Congress Committee shall meet at least three times a year, once immediately after the Congress, once during the year between the months of June and October, as may be determined upon by the Committee, and once immediately before the Congress, at such place as the Committee may find convenient.

6.—The Indian Congress Committee shall have an Honorary Secretary and a paid Assistant Secretary, with suitable office staff, for which a sum of Rs. 5,000 shall be granted annually, one half of which shall be provided by the Reception Committee of the place where the last Congress

is held, and the other half by the Reception Committee of the place where the next succeeding Congress is to be held.

The Secretary to the Indian National Congress shall be the Honorary Secretary of the Committee.

7.—Provincial Congress Committees shall be organized at the capitals of the different Presidencies and Provinces of India for the purpose of carrying on the work of political education, on lines of general appreciation of British rule and of constitutional action for the removal of its defects, throughout the year, by organising Standing Congress Committees, holding Provincial Conferences, and by such other means as they may deem proper, in consultation with the Indian Congress Committee, for furthering the objects of the Congress. They shall be the responsible agents of the Indian Congress Committee for their respective Provinces, and shall submit annual reports of their work to that Committee.

8.—The nomination of the President, the drafting of Resolutions, and all other business in connection with the Congress, shall be done by the Indian Congress Committee. It shall also, subject to the approval of the Congress, frame rules for the election of delegates, the election of speakers, and the conduct of the proceedings of the Congress.

9.—Rules and bye-laws shall be framed by the Provincial Congress Committees for the election of members, the conduct of their own proceedings, and other matters appertaining to their business. All such rules and bye-laws shall be subject to the approval of the Indian Congress Committee.

10.—A Committee, styled the British Congress Committee, shall be maintained in England, which shall represent there the interests of the Indian National Congress. The amount requisite for the expenses of the said Committee shall be determined and voted by the Congress, and the amount so voted shall be raised by the Indian Congress Committee in such manner as may be determined upon by that body from time to time.

11.—The Indian Congress Committee shall take such steps as they may deem fit to raise a permanent fund for carrying on the work of the Indian National Congress; and such fund shall be invested in the name of 7 trustees, one from each Province in India, to be appointed by the Congress.

Members of the Indian Congress Committee Appointed by the Congress under the above Resolution

General Members—

Mr. W.C. Bonnerjee
The Hon'ble Surendra Nath Banerjee
The Hon'ble P. Ananda Charlu
The Hon'ble P.M. Mehta
Mr. [R.N.] Madhulkar

Bengal—

Mr. A. M. Bose
Mr. Kali Charan Banerjee
Mr Bhupendra Nath Bose
The Hon'ble Baikunth Nath Sen
Mr. Ambica Charan Mozumdar
Mr. J. Ghosal

Mr. Aswini Kumar Dutt
Mr. Dipanarain Sinha

N.W.P. & Oudh—

The Hon'ble Pandit Bishambar Nath
Babu Ganga Prasad Varma
Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya
Mr. A. Nundy
Mr. Bishan Narayan Dar
Mr. Hafiz Abdur Raheem

Bombay—

Mr. D.E. Wacha
The Hon'ble G. Chandra Varkar
Mr. W.A. Chambers
Mr. R.M. Sayani
Mr. Daji Abaji Khare
Mr. Chimanlal H. Sitalwad
Mr. R.P. Karandikar
Mr. Tahilram Khem Chand

Punjab—

Lala Kanihia Lal
Sirdar Jhenda Singh
Lala Har Kishan Lal
Mr. Jaishiram

Central Provinces—

Mr. Bapurao Dada
Mr. Bhagirath Prasad
Mr. H.V. Kelker

Berar—

Mr. Deorao Vinayek
Mr. M.V. Joshi
Mr. G.S. Khaparde

Madras—

The Hon'ble C. Vijia Raghavachary
The Hon'ble C. Jambulinga Mudaliar
The Hon'ble G. Venkataratnam
Mr. C. Sankara Nair
Mr. P. Rangia Naidu
Mr. P. Ram Chandra Pillai
Mr. G. Subramania Iyer
Mr. V. Ryru Nambyar

Source: *Report of the Fifteenth Indian National Congress Held at Lucknow, on the 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th December, 1899,* pp. xxviii-xxxi.

Appendix G

CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1906

Resolution XVI

This Congress adopts tentatively for one year the following recommendations of the Standing Committee of the Congress appointed at Benares last year:—

I. Provincial Congress Committee

(a) The Committee recommends that each Province should organize at its Capital a Provincial Congress Committee in such manner as may be determined at a meeting of the Provincial Conference or at a special meeting, held for the purpose, of representatives of different districts in the Province.

(b) The Provincial Congress Committee should act for the Province in all Congress matters and it should be its special care to organize District Associations throughout the Province for sustained and continuous political work in the Province.

II. Central Standing Committee of the Congress

The Committee recommends that the Congress should appoint every year a Central Standing Committee for all India to carry out the Resolutions of the Congress, and to deal with urgent questions which may arise and which may require to be disposed of in the name of the Congress, and that this Committee should consist of:-

12 members from Bengal, Behar, Assam and Burma
8 members from Madras
8 members from Bombay
6 members from United Provinces
6 members from Punjab
4 members from Central Provinces
2 members from Berar

The President of the year and the General Secretaries being *ex-officio* members in addition.

III. Selection of President

In the matter of the selection of President in future years, the Committee recommends that the following scheme should be adopted:

The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held should organize a Reception Committee in such manner as it deems proper for making arrangements for the Congress Session, and the choice of the President should in the first instance rest with the Reception Committee, if after consulting Provincial Congress Committees, the

Reception Committee is able to make the choice by a majority of at least three-fourths of its members. If, however, no such majority can be obtained to support the nomination of any person, the question should be referred to the Central Standing Committee of the Congress, and the decision of this Committee should be final.

IV. Subjects Committee

The Committee recommends that the Subjects Committee, appointed at each Session of the Congress to settle its programme of work, should consist of:

25 representative of Bengal, Behar, Assam and Burma
15 representative of Madras
15 representative of Bombay
10 representative of United Provinces
10 representative of Punjab
6 representative of Central Provinces
4 representative of Berar

and 10 additional members for the Province in which the Congress is held, elected by the delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces in such manner as they deem proper: and that the President of the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all ex-Presidents and all ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees who may be present at the Congress, the General Secretaries of the Congress and the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year should, in addition, be *ex-oficio* members of the Subjects Committee.

Source: *Report of the Twenty-Second Indian National Congress Held at Calcutta on the 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th of December, 1906,* pp. iv-v.

Appendix H

CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ORGANISATION

(Adopted at the Meeting of the Convention Committee held at Allahabad on the 18th and 19th of April 1908)

OBJECTS

ARTICLE 1.

The Objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing Members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members. These Objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.

ARTICLE II.

Every Delegate to the Indian National Congress shall express in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article 1 of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

SESSIONS OF THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE III.

(a) The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily meet once every year during Christmas holidays at such town as may have been decided upon at the previous session of the Congress.

(b) If no such decision has been arrived at, the All-India Congress Committee shall decide the matter.

(c) An extraordinary session of the Congress may be summoned by the All-India Congress Committee, either of its own motion or on the requisition of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees, wherever and whenever it may deem it advisable to hold such session.

(d) It shall be open to the All-India Congress Committee to change the venue of the Congress to some other town when such change is deemed by it to be necessary or desirable owing to serious or unforeseen difficulties or other contingencies of a like nature.

COMPONENT PARTS OF THE ORGANISATION

ARTICLE IV.

The Indian National Congress Organisation will consist of:—

(a) The Indian National Congress;
(b) Provincial Congress Committees;
(c) District Congress Committees or Associations affiliated to the Provincial Congress Committees;
(d) Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees affiliated to the District Congress Committees or Associations;
(e) Political Associations or Public Bodies recognised as Electorates in accordance with clause (3) of Article XX;
(f) The All-India Congress Committee;
(g) The British Committee of the Congress; and
(h) Bodies formed or organised periodically by a Provincial Congress Committee, such as the Provincial or District Conferences or the Reception Committee of the Congress or Conference for the year.

ARTICLE V.

No person shall be eligible to be a member of any of the Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations or Bodies mentioned in clauses (b), (c), (d) and (h), of Article IV, unless he has attained the age of twenty-one and expresses in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEES

ARTICLE VI.

(a) To act for the Province in Congress matters and for organising Provincial or District Conferences in such manner as it may deem proper, there shall be a Provincial Congress Committee with its headquarters at the chief town of the Province in each of the following nine Provinces:
I. Madras; II. Bombay; III. United Bengal; IV. United Provinces; V. Punjab (including N.W. Frontier Province); VI. Central Provinces; VII. Behar; VIII. Berar and IX. Burma.
(b) The Provincial Sub-Committees of the Convention shall, in the first instance, form themselves into Provincial Congress Committees.
(c) The Secretaries of the Convention Committee shall take steps to form separate Provincial Congress Committees for Central Provinces, Behar and Burma.

ARTICLE VII.

Every Provincial Congress Committee so formed will add to its number:—

(a) Representatives elected in accordance with its terms of affiliation by every affiliated District Congress Committee or Association referred to in clause (c) of Article IV.
(b) As many representatives of recognised Political Associations or Public Bodies referred to in clause (c) of Article IV as each Provincial Congress Committee may think fit to determine.

(c) Such other persons in the Province as may have attended as many sessions of the Congress as Delegates as may be determined by each Provincial Congress Committee for its own Province.

(d) All such ex-Presidents of the Congress or ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees of the Congress as ordinarily reside within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee and may not have been enrolled as members of the said Committee in accordance with clause (b) of Article VI or by virtue of the provisions contained in any of the foregoing clauses of this Article.

(e) The Joint Secretary or Secretaries of the Congress ordinarily residing within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee, such Joint Secretary or Secretaries being added as *Ex-officio* member or members of the said Committee.

ARTICLE VIII.

Every member of the Provincial Congress Committee shall pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs. 5.

DISTRICT OR OTHER CONGRESS COMMITTEES OR ASSOCIATIONS

ARTICLE IX.

The Provincial Congress Committee shall have affiliated to itself a District Congress Committee or Association for each District, wherever possible, or for such other areas in the Province as it deems proper, subject to such conditions or terms of affiliation as it may deem expedient or necessary. It will be the duty of the District Congress Committee or Association to act for the District in Congress matters with the co-operation of any Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees which may be organised and affiliated to it, subject in all cases to the general control and approval of the Provincial Congress Committee.

ARTICLE X.

Every member of the District Congress Committee or Association shall either be a resident of the District or shall have a substantial interest in the District and shall pay an annual subscription of not less that one Rupee.

ARTICLE XI.

No District Congress Committee or Association or Public Body referred to in clauses (c) and (e) of Article IV shall be entitled to return representatives to the Provincial Congress Committee or Delegates to the Congress or to the Provincial Conference unless it contributes to the Provincial Congress Committee such annual subscription as may be determined by the latter.

ARTICLE XII.

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall frame its own Rules not inconsistent with the Constitution and Rules of the Congress. No District or other Congress Committee or Association mentioned in Article IX shall frame any Rules inconsistent with those framed by the Provincial Congress Committee to which it is affiliated.

THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XIII.

The All-India Congress Committee shall, as far as possible, be constituted as hereinbelow laid down:—

15 representatives of Madras;
15 representatives of Bombay;
20 representatives of United Bengal;
15 representatives of United Provinces;
13 representatives of Punjab (including N.-W. Frontier Province);
7 representatives of Central Provinces;
5 representatives of Behar;
5 representatives of Berar; and
2 representatives of Burma.

Provided as far as possible, that one-fifth of the total number of representatives shall be Mahomedans.

All ex-Presidents of the Congress, residing or present in India, and the General Secretaries of the Congress, who shall also be *ex-officio* General Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committee, shall be *ex-officio* members in addition.

ARTICLE XIV.

The representatives of each Province shall be elected by its Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting held, as far as possible, before the 30th of November for each year. If any Provincial Congress Committee fail to elect its representatives, the said representatives shall be elected by the Delegates for that Province present at the ensuing Congress. In either case, the representatives of each Province shall be elected from among the members of its Provincial Congress Committee, and the election shall be made, as far as possible, with due regard to the proviso in Article XIII.

ARTICLE XV.

The names of the representatives so elected by the different Provinces shall be communicated to the General Secretaries. These together with the names of the *ex-officio* members shall be announced at the Congress.

ARTICLE XVI.

The President of the Congress at which the All-India Congress Committee comes into existence shall, if he ordinarily resides in India, be *ex-officio* President of the All-India Congress Committee. In his absence the members of the All-India Congress Committee may elect their own President.

ARTICLE XVII.

(a) The All-India Congress Committee so constituted shall hold office from the dissolution of the Congress at which it comes into existence till the dissolution of the following Congress.

(b) If any vacancy arises by death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining members of the Province in respect of which the vacancy has arisen shall be competent to fill it up for the remaining period.

ARTICLE XVIII.

(a) It will be the duty of the All-India Congress Committee to take such steps as it may deem expedient and practicable to carry on the work and propaganda of the Congress and it shall have the power to deal with all such matters of great importance or urgency as may require to be disposed of in the name of and for the purposes of the Congress, in

addition to matters specified in this Constitution as falling within its powers or functions.

(b) The decision of the All-India Congress Committee shall, in every case above referred to, be final and binding on the Congress and on the Reception Committee or the Provincial Congress Committee, as the case may be, that may be affected by it.

ARTICLE XIX.

On the requisition in writing of not less than 20 of its members, the General Secretaries shall convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at the earliest possible time.

ELECTORATES AND DELEGATES

ARTICLE XX.

The right of electing Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall vest exclusively in (1) the British Committee of the Congress; (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations formed or affiliated as hereinabove laid down, and (3) such Political Associations or Public Bodies of more than three years' standing as may be recognised in that behalf by the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which the Political Association or Public Body belongs, provided that no such Political Association or Public Body shall be so recognised unless the said Political Association or Public Body, by a Resolution at a General Meeting of its members, expresses its acceptance of the principles embodied in Article of this Constitution and makes the acceptance of the same a condition precedent to new membership.

ARTICLE XXI.

All Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall pay a fee of Rs. 20 each and shall be not less than twenty-one years of age at the date of election.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE XXII.

(a) The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held shall take steps to form a Reception Committee for the Congress. Everyone, who ordinarily resides in the Province, fulfils the conditions laid down in Article V of this Constitution and pays a minimum contribution of Rs. 25, shall be eligible as a member of the Reception Committee.

(b) No one who is only a member of the Reception Committee, but not a Delegate, shall be allowed to vote or take part in the debate at the Congress.

(c) The Reception Committee shall be bound to provide the necessary funds for meeting all the expenses of the Congress as also the cost of preparing, printing, publishing and distributing the Report of the Congress.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

ARTICLE XXIII.

(a) In the month of June, the Reception Committee shall consult the several Provincial Congress Committees as to the selection of the President for the year's Congress. The Provincial Congress Committees shall make their recommendations by the end of July; and in the month of August the Reception Committee shall meet to consider the recommendations. If the person

recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is accepted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the President of the next Congress. If, however, the Reception Committee is unable to elect the President in the manner mentioned above, the matter shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee, whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In either case, the election shall be final.

Provided that in no case shall the person so elected President belong to the Province in which the Congress is to be held.

(b) There shall be no formal *election* of the President by or in the Congress, but merely the adoption (in accordance with the provisions in that behalf laid down in Rule 3, clause (b) of the "Rules" hereto appended) of a formal Resolution requesting the President, already elected in the manner hereinabove laid down, to take the chair.

SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XXIV.

The Subjects Committee to be appointed at each session of the Congress to settle its programme of business to be transacted shall, as far as possible, consist of:—

Not more than 15 representatives of Madras;
Not more than 15 representatives of Bombay;
Not more than 20 representatives of United Bengal;
Not more than 15 representatives of United Provinces;
Not more than 13 representatives of Punjab (including N.-W. F. Province);
Not more than 7 representatives of Central Provinces;
Not more than 5 representatives of Behar;
Not more than 5 representatives of Berar;
Not more than 2 representatives of Burma;
Not more than 5 representatives of British Committee of the Congress;
and additional 10 representatives of the Province in which the Congress is held;
all the above-mentioned representatives being elected, in accordance with Rule 9 of the "Rules" hereto appended, by the Delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces.

The President of the Congress for the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all ex-Presidents and ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees, the General Secretaries of the Congress, the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year, not exceeding six in number, and all the members of the All-India Congress Committee for the year, shall, in addition, be *ex-officio* members of the Subjects Committee.

ARTICLE XXV.

The President of the Congress for the year shall be *ex-officio* Chairman of the Subjects Committee.

CONTENTIOUS SUBJECTS AND INTEREST OF MINORITIES

ARTICLE XXVI.

(a) No subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mahomedan Delegates, as a body, object by a majority of three-fourths of their

number; and if after the discussion of any subject which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that the Hindu or Mahomedan Delegates, as a body, are, by a majority of three-fourths of their number, opposed to the Resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such Resolution shall be dropped.

(b) The President of the Congress for the year may nominate 5 Delegates to the Subjects Committee to represent minorities or to make up such deficiencies as he may think necessary.

(c) In any representations which the Congress may make or in any demands which it may put forward for the larger association of the people of India with the administration of the country, the interests of minorities shall be duly safeguarded.

VOTING AT THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE XXVII.

Ordinarily, all questions shall be decided by a majority of votes as laid down in Rule 21 of the "Rules" hereto appended, but in cases falling under Article XXX of this Constitution or whenever a division is duly asked for in accordance with Rule 22 of the "Rules" hereto appended, the voting at the Congress shall be by Provinces only. In cases falling under clause (1) of Article XXX, each Province shall have one vote, to be given as determined by a majority of its Delegates present at the Congress. In all other cases of Voting by Province, the vote of each Province, determined as aforesaid, shall be equivalent to the number of representatives assigned to the Provinces in constituting the All-India Congress Committee.

THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE XXVIII.

The Reception Committee of the Province in which the Congress is held shall remit to the British Committee of the Congress, through the General Secretaries of the Congress, half the amount of the fees received by it from Delegates.

GENERAL SECRETARIES

ARTICLE XXIX.

(a) The Indian National Congress shall have two General Secretaries who shall be annually elected by the Congress. They shall be responsible for the preparation, publication and distribution of the Report of the Congress. They shall also be responsible for the preparation and circulation of Draft Resolutions of the Congress, which they must send to the Provincial Congress Committees at the latest in the first week of December.

(b) The All-India Congress Committee shall make adequate provision for the expenses of the work devolving on the General Secretaries, either out of the surplus at the disposal of the Reception Committee or by calling upon the Provincial Congress Committee to make such contributions as it may deem fit to apportion among them.

CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION OR RULES

ARTICLE XXX.

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made (1) in Article 1 of this Constitution except by a unanimous vote of all the Provinces, and (2) in the rest of this Constitution or in the "Rules" hereto appended except by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of the

Provinces, provided, in either case, that no motion for any such addition, alteration or amendment shall be brought before the Congress unless it has been previously accepted by the Subjects Committee of the Congress for the year.

TRANSITORY PROVISIONS

ARTICLE XXXI.

(a) The Committee appointed by the Convention at Surat on 28th December 1907 for drawing up a Constitution for the Congress shall exercise all the powers of the All-India Congress Committee till thc formation of the latter at the next session of the Congress.

(b) The Secretaries of the said Convention Committee shall discharge the duties of the General Secretaries of the Congress till the dissolution of the next session of the Congress.

(c) The President and Secretaries of the Convention Committee should, in consultation with the Secretaries of the several Provincial Sub-Committees, ar- 'ge for the holding of a meeting of the Congress during Christmas next in accordance with this Constitution.

(d) For the year 1908, the Reception Committee may, in electing the President, consult the Provincial Congress Committees in the beginning of October, before the end of which month, the Provincial Congress Committees, on being so consulted, shall make their recommendations, and the rest of the procedure prescribed in Article XXIII should be followed and completed, as far as possible before the end of November.

Rashbehary Ghose,
President, Convention Committee.
Dinsha Edulji Wacha,
Daji Abaji Khare,
Hony. Secretaries, Convention Committee.

RULES FOR THE CONDUCT AND REGULATION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS MEETINGS

(Adopted at the Meeting of the Convention Committee held at Allahabad on the 18th and 19th of April 1908)

1. The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily hold an Annual Session at such place as may have been decided upon in accordance with Article III of the "Constitution" and on such days during Christmas week as may be fixed by the Reception Committee. An extraordinary session of the Congress shall be held at such town and on such days as the All-India Congress Committee may determine.

2. Each Congress session shall open with a meeting of the Delegates at such time and place as may be notified by the Reception Committee. The time and place of subsequent sittings of the session shall be fixed and announced by the President of the Congress.

3. The proceedings on the opening day and at the first sitting of each Congress session shall, as far as possible, consist of:—

(a) The Chairman of the Reception Committee's inaugural address of welcome to the Delegates.

(b) The adoption of a formal Resolution, to be moved, seconded and supported by such Delegates as the Chairman of the Reception Committee invites or permits, requesting

the President elected by the Reception Committee or the All-India Congress Committee, as the case may be, to take the chair, no opposition by way of a motion for amendment, adjournment or otherwise being allowed to postpone or prevent the carrying out of the said Resolution.

(c) The President's taking the chair and his inaugural address.

(d) Reading or distribution of the Report, if any, of the All-India Congress Committee and any statement that the General Secretaries may have to make.

(e) Any formal motions of thanks, congratulations, condolences, &c., as the President of the Congress may choose to move from the chair.

(f) The adjournment of the Congress for the appointment of the Subjects Committee and the announcement by the President of the time and place of the meetings of the Delegates of the different Provinces for the election of the members of the Subjects Committee and also of the first meeting of the Subjects Committee.

4. No other business or motions in any form shall be allowed at the opening sitting of the Congress session.

5. The Chairman of the Reception Committee shall preside over the assembly at the first sitting until the President takes the chair. The President of the Congress shall preside at all sittings of the Congress session as well as at all meetings of the Subjects Committee. In case of his absence and during such absence, any ex-President of the Congress present, who may be nominated by the President, and in case no ex-President is available, the Chairman of the Reception Committee shall preside at the Congress sitting; provided that the Subjects Committee may in such cases choose its own Chairman.

6. The President or the Chairman shall have, at all votings, one vote in his individual capacity and also a casting vote in case of equality of votes.

7. The President or Chairman shall decide all points of order and procedure summarily and his decision shall be final and binding.

8. The President or Chairman shall have the power, in cases of grave disorder or for any other legitimate reason, to adjourn the Congress either to a definite time or *sine die.*

9. The election of the members of the Subjects Committee shall take place at meetings of the Delegates of different Provinces held at such place and time as may be announced by the President. Each such meeting, in case of contest, shall have a Chairman who will first receive nominations, each nomination being made by at least five Delegates, and then after announcing all the nominations he may ask each Delegate to give in a list of the members he votes for, or he may put the nominated names to the vote in such order as he pleases, or if there are only two rival lists, he shall take votes on these lists and announce the result of the election and forthwith communicate the same to the General Secretaries of the Congress.

10. The Subjects Committee shall deliberate upon and prepare the agenda paper for the business to be transacted at the next Congress sitting. The General Secretaries shall, as far as practicable, distribute among the Delegates a printed copy of the agenda paper for each sitting before the sitting commences.

11. At each sitting of the Congress, the order in which business shall be transacted shall be as follows:-

(a) The Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee.

(b) Any substantive motion not included in (a) but which does not fall under Article XXX of the "Constitution" and which 25 Delegates request the President in writing, before the

commencement of the day's sitting, to be allowed to place before the Congress, provided, however, that no such motion shall be allowed unless it has been previously discussed at a meeting of the Subjects Committee and has received the support of at least a third of the members then present.

12. Nothing in the foregoing rule shall prevent the President from changing the order of the Resolutions mentioned in Rule 11 (a) or from himself moving from the chair formal motions of thanks, congratulations, condolences or the like.

13. The proposers, seconders and supporters of the Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee shall be Delegates and shall be selected by the said Committee. The President may allow other Delegates to speak to the Resolutions at his discretion and may allow any distinguished visitor to address the Congress. Nothing in the foregoing, however, shall prevent the President from moving from the chair such Resolutions as he may be authorised to do by the Subjects Committee.

14. An amendment may be moved to any motion provided that the same is relevant to the question at issue, that it does not raise a question already decided or anticipate any question embraced in a resolution on the agenda paper for the day and that it is couched in proper language and is not antagonistic to the fundamental principles of the Congress. Every amendment must be in the form of a proposition complete in itself.

15. When amendments are moved to a motion, they shall be put to the vote in the reverse order to that in which they have been moved.

16. A motion for an adjournment of the debate on a proposition may be made at any time and so also, with the consent of the President or Chairman, a motion for an adjournment of the House. The President or Chairman shall have the power to decline to put to vote any motion for adjournment if he considers it to be vexatious or obstructive or an abuse of the rules and regulations.

17. All motions, substantive or by way of amendment, adjournment, &c., shall have to be seconded, failing which they shall fall. No motions, whether those coming under Rule 11 (b) or for amendment, adjournment, closure, &c., shall be allowed to be moved unless timely intimation thereof is sent to the President with the motion stated in writing over the signatures of the proposer and seconder with the name of the Province from which they have been elected as Delegates.

18. No one who has taken part in the debate in Congress on a resolution shall be allowed to move or second a motion for adjournment or amendment in the course of the debate on that Resolution. If a motion for adjournment of the debate on any proposition is carried, the debate on the said proposition shall then cease and may be resumed only after the business on the agenda paper for the day is finished. A motion for adjournment of the House shall state definitely the time when the House is to resume business.

19. A motion for a closure of the debate on a proposition may be moved at any time after the lapse of half-an-hour from the time the proposition was moved. And if such motion for closure is carried, all discussion upon the original proposition or amendments proposed to it shall at once stop and the President shall proceed to take votes.

20. No motion for a closure of the debate shall be moved whilst a speaker is duly in possession of the House.

21. All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes, subject, however, to the provisions of Articles XXVII and XXX of the "Constitution". Votes shall ordinarily be taken by a show of hands or by the Delegates for or against standing up in their places in turn to have the numbers counted.

22. In cases not falling under Article XXX of the "Constitution", any twenty members of a Congress sitting may demand a division within 5 minutes of the declaration of the result of the voting by the President and such division shall be granted. Thereupon the Delegates of each Province shall meet at such time and place as the President may direct and the Chairman of each such meeting shall notify to the President the vote of the Province within the time specified by the President.

23. Every member of a sitting of the Congress or of the Subjects Committee shall be bound (a) to occupy a seat in the block allotted to his province, save as provided for in Rule 30, (b) to maintain silence when the President rises to speak or when another member is in possession of the House, (c) to refrain from hisses or interruptions of any kind or indulgence in improper and un-Parliamentary language, (d) to obey the Chair, (e) to withdraw when his own conduct is under debate, after he has heard the charge and been heard thereon, and (f) generally to conduct himself with propriety and decorum.

24. No member shall have the right at a Congress sitting to speak more than once on any motion except for a personal explanation or for raising a point of order. But the mover of a substantive motion (not one for amendment or adjournment) shall have the right of reply. A person who has taken part in a debate may speak upon an amendment or motion for adjournment moved after he had spoken. The President or Chairman shall have the right to fix a time-limit upon all speakers, as also to call to order or stop any speaker from further continuing his speech even before the time-limit expires, if he is guilty of tedious repetitions, improper expressions, irrelevant remarks, &c., and persists in them in spite of the warning from the President.

25. If a person does not obey the President's or the Chairman's orders or if he is guilty of disorderly conduct, the President shall have the right, with a warning in the first instance, and without a warning in case of contumacious disregard of his authority, to ask such member to leave the precincts of the House and on such requisition the member so ordered shall be bound to withdraw and shall be suspended from his functions as a member during the day's sitting.

26. If the President considers that the punishment he can inflict according to the foregoing section is not sufficient, he may, in addition to it, ask the House to award such punishment as the House deems proper. The Congress shall have the power in such cases of expelling the member from the entire Congress session.

27. The Reception Committee shall organise a body of such persons as it may deem fit for the purpose of keeping order during the meeting of the Congress or of its Subjects Committee or at divisions. There shall be a Captain at the head of this body and he shall carry out the orders of the President or the Chairman.

28. Visitors may be allowed at the sitting of the Congress on such terms and conditions as the Reception Committee determines. They may, at any time, be asked to withdraw by the President. They shall be liable to be summarily ejected from the House if they enter the area marked out for the Delegates, or if they disobey the Chair, or if they are guilty of disturbance or obstruction, or if they are in anywise disorderly in their behaviour.

29. The meetings of the Subjects Committee shall be open only to the members of that Committee and the meeting of the Delegates of each Province at divisions shall be open to the Delegates of that Province only, subject in either case to the provisions of Rule 27.

30. The Chairman of the Reception Committee and the President, as well as the Secretaries may, at their discretion, accommodate on the Presidential platform, (1) Leading members of the Congress, (2) Distinguished visitors, (3) Members of the Reception Committee and (4) Ladies, whether Delegates or Visitors.

31. The foregoing Rules shall apply, *mutatis nutandis,* to the Provincial or District Conferences organised by the Provincial Congress Committees as provided for in Article VI of the "Constitution."

RASHBEHARY GHOSE,
President, Convention Committee.
DINSHA EDULJI WACHA,
DAJI ABAJI KHARE,
Hony. Secretaries, Convention Committee.

Source: *Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Indian National Congress Held at Madras on the 28th, 29th and 30th December 1908,* Appendix B, pp. xix-xxx.

APPENDIX I

CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ORGANISATION

(As adopted by the Congress of 1908, amended by the Congress of 1911, and further amended by the Congress of 1912)

OBJECTS

ARTICLE I.

The Objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing Members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those members. These Objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.

ARTICLE II.

Every Delegate to the Indian National Congress shall express in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

SESSIONS OF THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE III.

(a) The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily meet once every year during the Christmas holidays at such town as may have been decided upon at the previous session of the Congress.

(b) If no such decision has been arrived at, the All-India Congress Committee shall decide the matter.

(c) An extraordinary session of the Congress may be summoned by the All-India Congress Committee either of its own motion or on the requisition of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees, wherever and whenever it may deem it advisable to hold such session.

(d) It shall be open to the All-India Congress Committee to change the venue of the Congress to some other town when such change is deemed by it to be necessary or desirable owing to serious or unforeseen difficulties or other contingencies of a like nature.

COMPONENT PARTS OF THE ORGANISATION

ARTICLE IV.

The Indian National Congress Organisation will consist of:-

(a) The Indian National Congress;
(b) Provincial Congress Committees;
(c) District Congress Committees;
(d) Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees affiliated to the District Congress Committees;
(e) Political Associations or Public Bodies recognised by the Provincial Congress Committees;
(f) The All-India Congress Committee;
(g) The British Committee of the Congress; and
(h) Bodies formed or organised periodically by a Provincial Congress Committee, such as the Provincial or District Conferences or the Reception Committee of the Congress or Conference for the year.

ARTICLE V.

No person shall be eligible to be a member of any of the Provincial or District or other Congress Committees unless he has attained the age of 21, and expresses in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution, and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEES

ARTICLE VI.

(a) To act for the Province, in Congress matters, and, for organising Provincial or District Conferences in such manner as it may deem proper, there shall be a Provincial Congress Committee with its headquarters at the chief town of the Province in each of the following nine Provinces:-

I. Madras; II. Bombay; III. United Bengal; IV. United Provinces; V. Punjab (including N.-W. Frontier Province); VI. Central Provinces; VII. Behar and Orissa; VIII. Berar; and IX. Burma.

ARTICLE VII.

Every Provincial Congress Committee will consist of:-

(a) Such persons in the Province as may have attended as many sessions of the Congress as Delegates as may be determined by each Provincial Congress Committee for its own Province;
(b) Representatives elected in accordance with its terms of affiliation by every affiliated District Congress Committee;
(c) As many representatives of recognised Political Associations or Public Bodies referred to in clause (e) of Article IV as each Provincial Congress Committee may think fit to determine;
(d) All such Ex-Presidents of the Congress, or Ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees of the Congress, as ordinarily reside within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee and may not have been enrolled as members of the said Committee in

accordance with Clause (b) of Article VI, or by virtue of the provisions contained in any of the foregoing clauses of this Article;

(e) The General Secretary or Secretaries of the Congress ordinarily residing within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee, such General Secretary or Secretaries being added as *ex officio* member or members of the said Committee.

ARTICLE VIII.

Every member of the Provincial Congress Committee shall pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs. 5.

DISTRICT OR OTHER CONGRESS COMMITTEES OR ASSOCIATIONS

ARTICLE IX.

The Provincial Congress Committee shall have affiliated to itself a District Congress Committee or Association for each District, wherever possible, or for such other areas in the Province as it deems proper, subject to such conditions or terms of affiliation as it may deem expedient or necessary. It will be the duty of the District Congress Committee or Association to act for the District in Congress matters with due co-operation of any Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees which may be organised and affiliated to it, subject in all cases to the general control and approval of the Provincial Congress Committee.

ARTICLE X.

Every member of the District Congress Committee or Association shall either be a resident of the District or shall have a substantial interest in the District and shall pay an annual subscription of not less than one Rupee.

ARTICLE XI.

No District Congress Committee or Association or Public Body referred to in Clauses (c) and (e) of Article IV shall be entitled to return representatives to the Provincial Congress Committee or Delegates to the Congress or to the Provincial Conference unless it contributes to the Provincial Congress Committee such annual subscription as may be determined by the latter.

ARTICLE XII.

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall frame its own Rules not inconsistent with the Constitution and the Rules of the Congress. No District or other Congress Committee or Association mentioned in Article IX shall frame any Rules inconsistent with those framed by the Provincial Congress Committee to which it is affiliated.

THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XIII.

The All-India Congress Committee shall, as far as possible, be constituted as hereinbelow laid down:-

15 representatives of Madras;
15 representatives of Bombay;
20 representatives of United Bengal (including Assam);
15 representatives of United Provinces;
13 representatives of Punjab (including N.W. Frontier Province);
7 representatives of Central Provinces;

15 representatives of Behar & Orissa;
5 representatives of Berar; and
2 representatives of Burma,

provided, as far as possible, that 1/5th of the total number of representatives shall be Mahomedans.

All Ex-Presidents of the Congress, residing or present in India, and the General Secretaries of the Congress, who shall also be *ex officio* General Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committee, shall be *ex officio* members in addition.

ARTICLE XIV.

The representatives of each Province shall be elected by its Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting held, as far as possible, before the 30th of November for each year. If any Provincial Congress Committee fail to elect its representatives, the said representatives shall be elected by the Delegates for that Province present at the ensuing Congress. In either case, the representatives of each Province shall be elected from among the members of its Provincial Congress Committee, and the election shall be made, as far as possible, with due regard to the proviso in Article XIII.

ARTICLE XV.

The names of the representatives so elected by the different Provinces shall be communicated to the General Secretaries. These together with the names of the *ex officio* members shall be announced at the Congress.

ARTICLE XVI.

The President of the Congress at which the All-India Congress Committee comes into existence shall, if he ordinarily resides in India, be *ex officio* President of the All-India Congress Committee. In his absence the members of the All-India Congress Committee may elect their own President.

ARTICLE XVII.

(a) The All-India Congress Committee so constituted shall hold office from the date of its appointment at the Congress till the appointment of the new Committee.

(b) If any vacancy arises by death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining members of the Province in respect of which the vacancy has arisen shall be competent to fill it up for the remaining period.

ARTICLE XVIII.

(a) It will be the duty of the All-India Congress Committee to take such steps as it may deem expedient and practicable to carry on the work and propaganda of the Congress and it shall have the power to deal with all such matters of great importance or urgency as may require to be disposed of in the name of, and for the purposes of, the Congress, in addition to matters specified in this Constitution as falling within its powers or functions.

(b) The decision of the All-India Congress Committee shall, in every case above referred to, be final and binding on the Congress and on the Reception Committee or the Provincial Congress Committee, as the case may be, that may be affected by it.

ARTICLE XIX.

On the requisition in writing of not less than 20 of its members the General Secretaries shall convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at the earliest possible time.

ELECTORATES AND DELEGATES

ARTICLE XX.

The right of electing Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall vest in (1) the British Committee of the Congress, (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations formed or affiliated as hereinabove laid down, (3) such Political Associations or Public Bodies of more than two years' standing as may be recognised in that behalf by the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which the Political Association or Public Body belongs, (4) Political Associations of British Indians resident outside British India of more than two years' standing recognised by the All-India Congress Committee, and (5) Public Meetings convened by Provincial or District Congress Committees or other recognised bodies.

ARTICLE XXI.

All Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall pay a fee of Rs. 10 each and shall be not less than 21 years of age at the date of election.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS.

ARTICLE XXII.

(a) The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held shall take steps to form a Reception Committee for the Congress. Everyone, who ordinarily resides in the Province, fulfils the conditions laid down in Article V of this Constitution and pays such contribution as may be determined by the Provincial Congress Committee, shall be eligible to be a member of the Reception Committee.

(b) No one who is only a member of the Reception Committee, but not a Delegate, shall be allowed to vote or take part in the debate at the Congress.

(c) The Reception Committee shall be bound to provide the necessary funds for meeting all the expenses of the Congress as also the cost of preparing, printing, publishing and distributing the Report of the Congress.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

ARTICLE XXIII.

(a) The several Provincial Congress Committees shall by the end of June suggest to the Reception Committee the names of persons who are in their opinion eligible for the Presidentship of the Congress, and the Reception Committee shall in the first week of July submit to all the Provincial Congress Committees the names as suggested for their final recommendations, provided that such final recommendation will be of any one, but not more, of such names, and the Reception Committee shall meet in the month of August to consider such recommendations. If the person recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is accepted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee, present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the President of the next Congress. If, however, the Reception Committee is unable to accept the President recommended by the Provincial Congress Committees, or in the case of emergency by resignation, death or otherwise of the President elected in such manner, the matter aforesaid shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee, whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In either case, the election shall be final.

Provided that in no case shall the person so elected President, belong to the Province in which the Congress is to be held.

(b) There shall be no formal *election* of the President by or in the Congress, but merely the adoption (in accordance with the provisions in that behalf laid down in Rule 3, Clause (b) of the "Rules" hereto appended) of a formal resolution requesting the President, already elected in the manner hereinabove laid down, to take the chair.

SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XXIV.

The Subjects Committee to be appointed at each session of the Congress to settle its programme of business to be transacted shall, as far as possible, consist of:-

Not more than 15 representatives of Madras;
Not more than 15 representatives of Bombay;
Not more than 20 representatives of United Bengal;
Not more than 15 representatives of United Provinces;
Not more than 13 representatives of Punjab (including N.W.F. Province);
Not more than 7 representatives of Central Provinces;
Not more than 15 representatives of Behar and Orissa;
Not more than 5 representatives of Berar;
Not more than 2 representatives of Burma;
Not more than 5 representatives of British Committee of the Congress;
And additional 10 representatives of the province in which the Congress is held;

all the above-mentioned representatives being elected, in accordance with Rule 9 of the "Rules" hereto appended, by the Delegates attending the Congress from the respective Provinces.

The President of the Congress for the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee for the year, all Ex-Presidents of the Congress and Ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees, the General Secretaries of the Congress, the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year, not exceeding six in number, and all the members of the All-India Congress Committee for the year, shall in addition be *ex officio* members of the Subjects Committee.

ARTICLE XXV.

The President of the Congress for the year shall be *ex officio* Chairman of the Subjects Committee and he may nominate 5 Delegates to the Subjects Committee to represent minorities or to make up such deficiencies as he may think necessary.

CONTENTIOUS SUBJECTS AND INTERESTS OF MINORITIES

ARTICLE XXVI.

(a) No subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee, or allowed to be discussed at any Congress, by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mohammedan Delegates, as a body, object by a majority of 3/4ths of their number; and if, after the discussion of any subject, which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that the Hindu or Mohammedan Delegates, as a body, are, by a majority of 3/4ths of their number, opposed to the resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such resolution shall be dropped; Provided that in both these cases the

3/4ths mentioned above shall not be less than a 4th of the total number of Delegates assembled at the Congress.

(b) In any representations which the Congress may make or in any demands which it may put forward for the larger association of the people of India with the administration of the country, the interests of minorities shall be duly safeguarded.

VOTING AT THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE XXVII.

Ordinarily, all questions shall be decided by a majority of votes as laid down in Rule 21 of the "Rules" hereto appended, but in cases falling under Article XXX of this Constitution or whenever a division is duly asked for in accordance with Rule 22 of the "Rules" hereto appended, the voting at the Congress shall be by Provinces only. In cases falling under Clause (1) of Article XXX, each Province shall have one vote, to be given as determined by a majority of its Delegates present at the Congress. In all other cases of voting by Provinces, the vote of each Province, determined as aforesaid, shall be equivalent to the number of representatives assigned to the Province in constituting the All-India Congress Committee.

THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE XXVIII.

The Reception Committee of the Province, in which the Congress is held, shall remit to the British Committee of the Congress, through the General Secretaries of the Congress, half the amount of the fees received by it from Delegates, subject to a minimum of Rs. (3,000) Three Thousand.

GENERAL SECRETARIES

ARTICLE XXIX

(a) The Indian National Congress shall have two General Secretaries who shall be annually elected by the Congress. They shall be responsible for the preparation, publication and distribution of the Report of the Congress and they shall submit a full account of the funds which may come into their hands and a Report of the work of the year to the All-India Congress Committee, at a meeting to be held at the place and about the time of the session of the Congress for the year; and copies of such account and report shall be previously sent to all the Provincial Congress Committees.

(b) The All-India Congress Committee shall make adequate provision for the expenses of the work devolving on the General Secretaries, either out of the surplus at the disposal of the Reception Committee or by calling upon the Provincial Congress Committees to make such contributions as it may deem fit to apportion among them.

CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION OR RULES

ARTICLE XXX.

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made (1) in Article I of this Constitution except by a unanimous vote of all the Provinces, and (2) in the rest of this Constitution or in the "Rules" hereto appended, except by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of the Provinces, provided in either case, that no motion for any such addition alteration or amendment shall be brought before the Congress unless it has been previously accepted by the Subjects Committee of the Congress for the year.

RULES FOR THE CONDUCT AND REGULATION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS MEETINGS

As adopted by the Congress of 1908, 1911 and 1912

1. The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily hold an annual session at such place as may have been decided upon in accordance with Article III of the "Constitution" and on such days during Christmas week as may be fixed by the Reception Committee. An extraordinary session of the Congress shall be held at such town and on such days as the All-India Congress Committee may determine.

2. Each Congress session shall open with a meeting of the Delegates at such time and place as may be notified by the Reception Committee. The time and place of subsequent sittings of the session shall be fixed and announced by the President of the Congress.

3. The proceedings on the opening day and at the first sitting of each Congress session shall, as far as possible, consist of:-

(a) The Chairman of the Reception Committee's inaugural address of welcome to the Delegates.

(b) The adoption of a formal resolution, to be moved, seconded and supported by such Delegates as the Chairman of the Reception Committee invites or permits, requesting the President elected by the Reception Committee or the All-India Congress Committee, as the case may be, to take the chair, no opposition by way of a motion for amendment, adjournment or otherwise being allowed to postpone, or prevent, the carrying out of the said resolution.

(c) The President's taking the chair and his inaugural address.

(d) The reading or distribution of the Report, if any, of the All-India Congress Committee and any statement that the General Secretaries may have to make.

(e) Any formal motions of thanks, congratulations, condolences, &c., as the President of the Congress may choose to move from the chair.

(f) The adjournment of the Congress for the appointment of the Subjects Committee and the announcement by the President of the time and place of the meetings of the Delegates of the different provinces for the election of the members of the Subjects Committee and also of the first meeting of the Subjects Committee.

4. No other business, or motions in any form, shall be allowed at the opening sitting of the Congress session.

5. The Chairman of the Reception Committee shall preside over the assembly at the first sitting until the President takes the chair. The President of the Congress shall preside at all sittings of the Congress session as well as at all meetings of the Subjects Committee. In the case of his absence and during such absence, any Ex-President of the Congress present, who may be nominated by the President, and in case no Ex-President is available, the Chairman of the Reception Committee shall preside at the Congress sitting; provided that the Subjects Committee may in such cases choose its own Chairman.

6. The President or the Chairman shall have, at all votings, one vote in his individual capacity and also a casting vote in case of the equality of votes.

7. The President or Chairman shall decide all points of order and procedure summarily and his decision shall be final and binding.

8. The President or Chairman shall have the power in cases of grave disorder, or for any other legitimate reason, to adjourn the Congress either to a definite time or *sine die.*

9. The election of the members of the Subjects Committee shall take place at meetings of the Delegates of the different provinces held at such place and time as may be announced by the President. Each such meeting, in case of contest, shall have a Chairman who will first receive nominations, each nomination being made by at least 2 Delegates, and then after announcing all the nominations he may ask each Delegate to give in a list of the members he votes for, or he may put the nominated names to the vote in such order as he pleases, or if there are only two rival lists, he shall take votes on these lists and announce the result of the election and forthwith communicate the same to the General Secretaries of the Congress.

10. The Subjects Committee shall deliberate upon and prepare the agenda paper for the business to be transacted at the next Congress sitting. The General Secretaries shall, as far as practicable, distribute among the Delegates a printed copy of the agenda paper for each sitting before the sitting commences.

11. At each sitting of the Congress, the order in which business shall be transacted shall be as follows:-

(a) The Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee.

(b) Any substantive motion not included in (a) but which does not fall under Article XXX of the "Constitution" and which 25 Delegates request the President in writing, before the commencement of the day's sitting, to be allowed to place before the Congress, provided, however, that no such motion shall be allowed unless it has been previously discussed at a meeting of the Subjects Committee and has received the support of at least a third of the members then present.

12. Nothing in the foregoing rule shall prevent the President from changing the order of the Resolutions mentioned in Rule 11 (a) or from himself moving from the chair formal motions of thanks, congratulations, condolences or the like.

13. The proposers, seconders and supporters of the Resolutions recommended for adoption by the Subjects Committee shall be Delegates and shall be selected by the said Committee. The President may allow other Delegates to speak to the Resolutions at his discretion and may allow any distinguished visitor to address the Congress. Nothing in the foregoing, however, shall prevent the President from moving from the chair such Resolutions as he may be authorised to do by the Subjects Committee.

14. An amendment may be moved to any motion provided that the same is relevant to the question at issue, that it does not raise a question already decided, or anticipate any question embraced in a Resolution on the agenda paper for the day, and that it is couched in proper language and is not antagonistic to the fundamental principles of the Congress. Every amendment must be in the form of a proposition complete in itself.

15. When amendments are moved to a motion, they shall be put to the vote in the reverse order in which they have been moved.

16. A motion for an adjournment of the debate on a proposition may be made at any time and so also, with the consent of the President or Chairman, a motion for an adjournment of the House. The President or Chairman shall have the power to decline to put to vote any motion for adjournment if he considers it to be vexatious or obstructive or an abuse of the Rules and Regulations.

17. All motions, substantive or by way of amendment, adjournment, &c., shall have to be seconded, failing which they shall fall. No motions, whether those coming under Rule 11 (b) or for amendment, adjournment, closure, &c., shall be allowed to be moved unless timely intimation thereof is sent to the President with the motion clearly stated in writing over the signatures of the proposer and seconder with the name of the Province from which they have been elected as Delegates.

18. No one who has taken part in the debate in Congress on a resolution shall be allowed to move or second a motion for adjournment of amendment in the course of the debate on that resolution. If a motion for adjournment of the debate on any proposition is carried, the debate on the said proposition shall then cease and may be resumed only after the business on the agenda paper for the day is finished. A motion for adjournment of the House shall state definitely the time when the House is to resume business.

19. A motion for a closure of the debate on a proposition may be moved at any time after the lapse of half an hour from the time the proposition was moved. And if such motion for closure is carried, all discussion upon the original proposition or amendments proposed to it shall at once stop and the President shall proceed to take votes.

20. No motion for a closure of the debate shall be moved whilst a speaker is duly in possession of the House.

21. All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes, subject, however, to the provisions of Articles XXVII and XXX of the "Constitution." Votes shall ordinarily be taken by a show of hands or by the Delegates for or against standing up in their places in turn to have the numbers counted.

22. In cases not falling under Article XXX of the "Constitution," any twenty members of a Congress sitting may demand a division within 5 minutes of the declaration of the result of the voting by the President and such division shall be granted. Thereupon, the Delegates of each Province shall meet at such time and place as the President may direct and the Chairman of each such meeting shall notify to the President the vote of the Province within the time specified by the President.

23. Every member of a sitting of the Congress or of the Subjects Committee shall be bound (a) to occupy a seat in the block allotted to his province, save as provided for in Rule 30, (b) to maintain silence when the President rises to speak or when another member is in possession of the House, (c) to refrain from hisses or interruptions of any kind or indulgence in improper and un-Parliamentary language, (d) to obey the Chair, (e) to withdraw when his own conduct is under debate after he has heard the charge and been heard thereon, and (f) generally to conduct himself with propriety and decorum.

24. No member shall have the right at a Congress sitting to speak more than once on any motion except for a personal explanation or for raising a point of order. But the mover of a substantive motion (not one for amendment or adjournment) shall have the right of reply. A person who has taken part in a debate may speak upon an amendment or motion for adjournment moved, after he has spoken. The President or Chairman shall have the right to fix a time-limit upon all speakers, as also to call to order or stop *any speaker* from further continuing his speech even before the time-limit expires, if he is guilty of tedious repetitions, improper expressions, irrelevant remarks, &c., and persists in them in spite of the warning from the President.

25. If a person does not obey the President's or the Chairman's orders or if he is guilty of disorderly conduct, the President shall have the right, with a warning in the first instance, and

without a warning in case of contumacious disregard of his authority, to ask such member to leave the precincts of the House, and on such requisition, the member so ordered shall be bound to withdraw and shall be suspended from his functions as a member during the day's sitting.

26. If the President considers that the punishment he can inflict according to the foregoing section is not sufficient, he may in addition to it ask the House to award such punishment as the House deems proper. The Congress shall have the power in such cases of expelling the member from the entire Congress session.

27. The Reception Committee shall organise a body of such persons as it may deem fit for the purpose of keeping order during the meeting of the Congress or of its Subjects Committee or at divisions. There shall be a Captain at the head of this body and he shall carry out the orders of the President or the Chairman.

28. Visitors may be allowed at the sitting of the Congress on such terms and conditions as the Reception Committee determines. They may at any time be asked to withdraw by the President. They shall be liable to be summarily ejected from the House if they enter the area marked out for the Delegates, or if they disobey the Chair, or if they are guilty of disturbance or obstruction, of if they are in anywise disorderly in their behaviour.

29. The meeting of the Subjects Committee shall be open only to the members of that Committee and the meetings of the Delegates of each Province at divisions shall be open to the Delegates of that Province only, subject in either case to the provisions of Rule 27.

30. The Chairman of the Reception Committee, and the President as well as the Secretaries may, at their discretion, accommodate on the Presidential platform (1) Leading members of the Congress, (2) Distinguished visitors, (3) Members of the Reception Committee, (4) Ladies, whether Delegates or visitors, and (5) Members of the All-India Congress Committee.

31 The foregoing Rules shall apply, *mutatis mutandis,* to the Provincial or District Conferences organised by the Provincial Congress Committees, as provided for in Article VI of the "Constitution."

Source: *Report of the Proceedings of the Twenty-Ninth Indian National Congress Held at Madras on the 28th, 29th and 30th December 1914,* Appendix A, pp. 142-56.

APPENDIX J

CONSTITUTION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS ORGANISATION

(As amended at the 30th Indian National Congress, 1915, Bombay)

OBJECTS

ARTICLE I.

The objects of the Indian National Congress are the attainment by the people of India of a system of Government similar to that enjoyed by the self-governing Members of the British Empire and a participation by them in the rights and responsibilities of the Empire on equal terms with those Members. These objects are to be achieved by constitutional means by bringing about a steady reform of the existing system of administration and by promoting national unity, fostering public spirit and developing and organising the intellectual, moral, economic and industrial resources of the country.

ARTICLE II.

Every Delegate to the Indian National Congress shall express in writing his acceptance of the objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended

SESSIONS OF THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE III.

(a) The Indian National Congress shall ordinarily meet once every year during Christmas holidays at such place as may have been decided upon at the previous session of the Congress.

(b) If no such decision has been arrived at, the All-India Congress Committee shall decide the matter.

(c) An extraordinary session of the Congress may be summoned by the All-India Congress Committee, either of its own motion or on the requisition of a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees, wherever and whenever it may deem it advisable to hold such session.

(d) It shall be open to the All-India Congress Committee to change the venue of the Congress to some other town when such change is deemed by it to be necessary or desirable owing to serious or unforeseen difficulties or other contingencies of a like nature.

COMPONENT PARTS OF THE ORGANISATION

ARTICLE IV.

The Indian National Congress Organisation will consist of:-

(a) The Indian National Congress;
(b) Provincial Congress Committees;
(c) District Congress Committees;
(d) Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees affiliated to the District Congress Committees;
(e) Political Associations or Public Bodies recognised by the Provincial Congress Committees;
(f) The All-India Congress Committee;
(g) The British Committee of the Congress; and
(h) Bodies formed or organised periodically by a Provincial Congress Committee, such as the Provincial or District Conferences or the Reception Committee of the Congress or Conference for the year.

ARTICLE V.

No person shall be eligible to be a member of any of the Provincial or District or other Congress Committees unless he has attained the age of 21 and expresses in writing his acceptance of the Objects of the Congress as laid down in Article I of this Constitution and his willingness to abide by this Constitution and by the Rules of the Congress hereto appended.

PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEES

ARTICLE VI.

To act for the Province in Congress matters and for organising Provincial or District Conferences in such manner as it may deem proper, there shall be a Provincial Congress Committee with its headquarters at the chief town of the Province in each of the following nine Provinces:-

I. Madras; II. Bombay; III. Bengal; IV. United Provinces; V. Panjab (including N.W. Frontier Province); VI. Central Provinces; VII. Behar and Orissa; VIII. Berar; and IX. Burma.

For this purpose Coorg and the areas administered by the British Government in the Nizam's Dominions, Mysore, Travancore and Cochin, shall belong to Madras; similar areas in Baroda and Kathiawar and Southern Maratha States to Bombay; Assam to Bengal; Delhi, Ajmer, Merwara, and the areas administered by the British Government in Rajputana to the United Provinces; British Baluchistan to the Panjab; areas administered by the British Government in Central India to the Central Provinces.

ARTICLE VII.

Every Provincial Congress Committee will consist of:-

(a) Such persons in the Province as may have attended as many sessions of the Congress as Delegates as may be determined by each Provincial Congress Committee for its own Province;
(b) Representatives elected in accordance with its terms of affiliation by every affiliated District Congress Committee;
(c) As many representatives of recognised Political Associations or Public Bodies referred to in clause (e) of Article IV as each Provincial Congress Committee may think fit to determine;
(d) All such Ex-Presidents of the Congress or Ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees of the Congress as ordinarily reside within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress

Committee and may not have been enrolled as members of the said Committee in accordance with clause (b) of Article VI of the Constitution of 1908 or by virtue of the provisions contained in any of the foregoing clauses of this Article;

(e) The General Secretary or Secretaries of the Congress ordinarily residing within the jurisdiction of the Provincial Congress Committee, such General Secretary or Secretaries being added as *ex-officio* member or members of the said Committee.

ARTICLE VIII.

Every member of the Provincial Congress Committee shall pay an annual subscription of not less than Rs. 5.

DISTRICT OR OTHER CONGRESS COMMITTEES OR ASSOCIATIONS

ARTICLE IX.

The Provincial Congress Committee shall have affiliated to itself a District Congress Committee or Association for each District, wherever possible, or for such other areas in the Province as it deems proper, subject to such conditions or terms of affiliation as it may deem expedient or necessary. It will be the duty of the District Congress Committee or Association to act for the District in Congress matters with the co-operation of any Sub-divisional or Taluka Congress Committees which may be organised and affiliated to it, subject in all cases to the general control and approval of the Provincial Congress Committee.

ARTICLE X.

Every member of the District Congress Committee or Association shall either be a resident of the District or shall have a substantial interest in the District and shall pay an annual subscription of not less than one Rupee.

ARTICLE XI.

No District Congress Committee or Association or Public Body referred to in Clauses (c) and (e) of Article IV shall be entitled to return representatives to the Provincial Congress Committee or Delegates to the Congress or to the Provincial Conference unless it contributes to the Provincial Congress Committee such annual subscription as may be determined by the latter.

ARTICLE XII.

Each Provincial Congress Committee shall frame its own Rules not inconsistent with the Constitution and the Rules of the Congress. No District or other Congress Committee or Association mentioned in Article IX shall frame any Rules inconsistent with those framed by the Provincial Congress Committee to which it is affiliated.

THE ALL-INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XIII.

The All-India Congress Committee shall, as far as possible, be constituted as hereinbelow laid down:-

15 Representatives of Madras;

15 Representatives of Bombay;

20 Representatives of Bengal;

15 Representatives of United Provinces;

13 Representatives of Panjab (including N.W. Frontier Province);
7 Representatives of Central Provinces;
15 Representatives of Behar and Orissa;
5 Representatives of Berar; and
2 Representatives of Burma,

provided, as far as possible, that one-fifth of the total number of representatives shall be Mahomedans.

All Ex-Presidents of the Congress, residing or present in India, and the General Secretaries of the Congress, who shall also be *ex-officio* General Secretaries of the All-India Congress Committee, shall be *ex-officio* members in addition.

ARTICLE XIV.

The representatives of each Province shall be elected by its Provincial Congress Committee at a meeting held, as far as possible, before the 30th of November for each year. If any Provincial Congress Committee fail to elect its representatives, the said representatives shall be elected by the Delegates for that Province present at the ensuing Congress. In either case, the representatives of each Province shall be elected from among the members of its Provincial Congress Committee and the election shall be made, as far as possible, with due regard to the proviso in Article XIII.

ARTICLE XV.

The names of the representatives so elected by the different Provinces shall be communicated to the General Secretaries. These together with the names of the *ex-officio* members shall be announced at the Congress.

ARTICLE XVI.

The President of the Congress at which the All-India Congress Committee comes into existence, shall, if he ordinarily resides in India, be *ex-officio* President of the All-India Congress Committee. In his absence the members of the All-India Congress Committee may elect their own President.

ARTICLE XVII.

(a) The All-India Congress Committee so constituted shall hold office from the date of its appointment at the Congress till the appointment of the new Committee.

(b) If any vacancy arises by death, resignation or otherwise, the remaining members of the Province in respect of which the vacancy has arisen shall be competent to fill it up for the remaining period.

ARTICLE XVIII.

(a) It will be the duty of the All-India Congress Committee to take such steps as it may deem expedient and practicable to carry on the work and propaganda of the Congress and it shall have the power to deal with all such matters of great importance or urgency as may require to be disposed of in the name of and for the purposes of the Congress, in addition to matters specified in this Constitution as falling within its powers or functions.

(b) The decision of the All-India Congress Committee shall, in every case above referred to, be final and binding on the Congress and on the Reception Committee or the Provincial Congress Committee, as the case may be, that may be affected by it.

ARTICLE XIX.

On the requisition in writing of not less than 20 of its members, the General Secretaries shall convene a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at the earliest possible time.

ELECTORATES AND DELEGATES

ARTICLE XX.

The right of electing Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall vest in (1) the British Committee of the Congress, (2) Provincial or District or other Congress Committees or Associations formed or affiliated as hereinabove laid down, (3) such Political Associations or Public Bodies of more than two years' standing as may be recognised in that behalf by the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which the Political Association or Public Body belongs, (4) Political Associations of British Indians resident outside British India of more than two years' standing recognised by the All-India Congress Committee, (5) Public Meetings convened by the Provincial or District Congress Committees or other recognised bodies, and (6) Public Meetings convened under the auspices of any Association, which is of not less than two years' standing on the 31st December 1915 and which has as one of its objects the attainment of Self-Government by India on Colonial lines within the British Empire by constitutional means;

Provided

(a) That the said Association by a special resolution accepts Article I of the Congress Constitution and notifies to that effect to the Provincial Congress Committee of the Province to which it belongs.

(b) That the said Association makes the acceptance of the said Article I a condition precedent to new membership.

(c) That the total number of the delegates to be elected by such public meeting shall not exceed 15 in number and no such Association shall be entitled to call more than one public meeting for the said purposes for any one session of the Congress.

But this however will be subject to the right of the All-India Congress Committee to disqualify any such political Association or Body at any time.

Explanation:—No person elected as a Delegate need be a member of any Congress Committee if he is otherwise qualified.

ARTICLE XXI.

All Delegates to the Indian National Congress shall pay a fee of Rs. 10 each and shall be not less than 21 years of age at the date of election.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE XXII.

(a) The Provincial Congress Committee of the Province in which the Congress is to be held shall take steps to form a Reception Committee for the Congress. Everyone, who ordinarily resides in the Province, fulfils the conditions laid down in Article V of this Constitution and pays such contribution as may be determined by the Provincial Congress Committee shall be eligible to be a member of the Reception Committee.

(b) No one who is only a member of the Reception Committee, but not a Delegate, shall be allowed to vote or take part in the debate at the Congress.

(c) The Reception Committee shall be bound to provide the necessary funds for meeting all the expenses of the Congress as also the cost of preparing, printing, publishing and distributing the Report of the Congress.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

ARTICLE XXIII.

(a) The several Provincial Congress Committees shall, as far as possible, by the end of June suggest to the Reception Committee the names of persons who are in their opinion eligible for the Presidentship of the Congress, and the Reception Committee shall, as far as possible, in the first week of July submit to all the Provincial Congress Committees the names as suggested for their final recommendations, provided that such final recommendation will be of any one, but not more, of such names, and the Reception Committee shall, as far as possible, meet in the month of August to consider such recommendations. If the person recommended by a majority of the Provincial Congress Committees is accepted by a majority of the members of the Reception Committee present at a special meeting called for the purpose, that person shall be the President of the next Congress. If, however, the Reception Committee is unable to accept the President recommended by the Provincial Congress Committees or, in case of emergency by resignation, death, or otherwise of the President elected in this manner, the matter shall forthwith be referred by it to the All-India Congress Committee, whose decision shall be arrived at, as far as possible, before the end of September. In either case, the election shall be final. Provided that in no case shall the person so elected President belong to the Province in which the Congress is to be held.

(b) There shall be no formal *election* of the President by or in the Congress but merely the adoption (in accordance with the provisions in that behalf laid down in Rule 3 Clause (b) of the "Rules" hereto appended) of a formal resolution requesting the President, already elected in the manner hereinabove laid down, to take the chair.

SUBJECTS COMMITTEE

ARTICLE XXIV.

The Subjects Committee to be appointed at each session of the Congress to settle its programme of business to be transacted shall, as far as possible, consist of:—

Not more than 15 representatives of Madras;
Not more than 15 representatives of Bombay;
Not more than 20 representatives of Bengal;
Not more than 15 representatives of United Provinces;
Not more than 13 representatives of Panjab (including N.W.F. Province);
Not more than 7 representatives of Central Provinces;
Not more than 15 representatives of Behar and Orissa;
Not more than 5 representatives of Berar;
Not more than 2 representatives of Burma;
Not more than 5 representatives of British Committee of the Congress;
And additional 10 representatives of the Province in which the Congress is held.

All the above-mentioned representatives being elected, in accordance with Rule 9 of "Rules" hereto appended, by the Delegates, attending the Congress from the respective Provinces.

The President of the Congress for the year, the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the year, all ex-Presidents of the Congress and ex-Chairmen of Reception Committees, the General Secretaries of the Congress, the local Secretaries of the Congress for the year, not exceeding six in number, and all the members of the All-India Congress Committee for the year, shall in addition be *ex-officio* members of the Subjects Committee.

ARTICLE XXV.

The President of the Congress for the year shall be *ex-officio* Chairman of the Subjects Committee and he may nominate 5 Delegates to the Subjects Committee to represent minorities or to make up such deficiencies as he may think necessary.

CONTENTIOUS SUBJECTS AND INTEREST OF MINORITIES

ARTICLE XXVI.

(a) No subject shall be passed for discussion by the Subjects Committee or allowed to be discussed at any Congress by the President thereof, to the introduction of which the Hindu or Mahomedan Delegates, as a body, object by a majority of 3/4ths of their number; and if, after the discussion of any subject, which has been admitted for discussion, it shall appear that the Hindu or Mahomedan Delegates, as a body, are by majority of 3/4ths of their number, opposed to the resolution which it is proposed to pass thereon, such resolution shall be dropped; provided that in both these cases the 3/4ths mentioned above shall not be less than a 4th of the total number of Delegates assembled at the Congress.

(b) In any representations which the Congress may make or in any demands which it may put forward for the larger association of the people of India with the administration of the country, the interests of minorities shall be duly safeguarded.

VOTING AT THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE XXVII.

Ordinarily, all questions shall be decided by a majority of votes as laid down in Rule 21 of the "Rules" hereto appended, but in cases falling under Article XXX of this Constitution or whenever a division is duly asked for in accordance with Rule 22 of the "Rules" hereto appended, the voting at the Congress shall be by Provinces only. In cases failing under Clause (1) of Article XXX, each Province shall have one vote, to be given as determined by a majority of its Delegates present at the Congress. In all other cases of voting by Provinces, the vote of each Province, determined as aforesaid, shall be equivalent to the number of representatives assigned to the Province in constituting the All-India Congress Committee.

THE BRITISH COMMITTEE OF THE CONGRESS

ARTICLE XXVIII.

The Reception Committee of the Province, in which the Congress is held, shall remit to the British Committee of the Congress, through the General Secretaries of the Congress, [half] the amount of the fees received by it from Delegates, subject to a minimum of Rs. (3,000) Three Thousand.

GENERAL SECRETARIES

ARTICLE XXIX.

(a) The Indian National Congress shall have two General Secretaries who shall be annually elected by the Congress. They shall be responsible for the preparation, publication and distribution of the Report of the Congress and they shall submit a full account of the funds which may come into their hands and a Report of the work of the year to the

All-India Congress Committee at a meeting to be held at the place and about the time of the session of the Congress for the year; and copies of such account and report shall be sent to all the Provincial Congress Committees and be presented to the Congress.

(b) The All-India Congress Committee shall make adequate provision for the expenses of the work devolving on the General Secretaries, either out of the surplus at the disposal of the Reception Committee or by calling upon the Provincial Congress Committees to make such contributions as it may deem fit to apportion among them.

CHANGES IN THE CONSTITUTION OR RULES

ARTICLE XXX.

No addition, alteration or amendment shall be made (1) in Article I of this Constitution except by a unanimous vote of all the Provinces, and (2) in the rest of this Constitution or in the "Rules" hereto appended except by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes of the Provinces, provided, in either case, that no motion for any such addition, alteration or amendment shall be brought before the Congress unless it has been previously accepted by the Subjects Committee of the Congress for the year.

Source: *Report of the Thirtieth Indian National Congress Held at Bombay on the 27th, 28th and 29th December, 1915,* Appendix D, pp. 189-97.

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JACKET ILLUSTRATION: The First Indian National Congress, 1885

AWAKE!

Sons of Ind, why sit ye idle,
Wait ye for some Deva's aid?
Buckle to, be up and doing!
Nations by themselves are made!

Are ye Serfs or are ye Freemen,
Ye that grovel in the shade?
In your own hands rest the issues!
By themselves are nations made!

Ye are taxed, what voice in spending
Have ye when the tax is paid?
Up! Protest! Right triumphs ever!
Nations by themselves are made!

Yours the land, lives, *all*, at stake, tho'
Not by you the cards are played;
Are ye dumb? Speak up and claim them!
By themselves are nations made!

What avail your wealth, your learning,
Empty titles, sordid trade?
True self-rule were worth them all!
Nations by themselves are made!

Are ye dazed, or are ye children,
Ye, that crouch, supine, afraid?
Will your childhood last for ever?
By themselves are nations made!

Whispered murmurs darkly creeping,
Hidden worms beneath the glade,
Not by such shall wrong be righted!
Nations by themselves are made!

Do ye suffer? do ye feel
Degradation? undismayed
Face and grapple with your wrongs!
By themselves are nations made!

Ask no help from Heaven or Hell!
In yourselves alone seek aid!
He that wills, and dares, has all;
Nations by themselves are made!

Sons of Ind, be up and doing,
Let your course by none be stayed;
Lo! the Dawn is in the East;
By themselves are nations made!

UNION.

A.O. Hume, *The Old Man's Hope. A Tract for the Times.* Calcutta, 1886.